

2024 NAPA COUNTY FARMWORKER HOUSING NEEDS & IMPACTS ASSESSMENT



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Foreword

The Napa Valley, like much of California, is facing a housing crisis that is causing a persistent and growing labor shortage affecting workers and businesses in Napa. Addressing this housing crisis requires understanding the housing needs of our workforce and the business impacts of the housing gap. The Farmworker Housing Needs and Impacts Assessment is designed to inform this understanding by focusing on the unique housing needs and challenges facing Napa farmworkers.

The Steering Committee came together with a shared belief that addressing the housing needs of our farmworkers is crucial for preserving the character, brand, and economy of Napa Valley. Our committee represents the industry, employers, foundations, and social service providers at the core of Napa's wine industry, all of whom are collectively affected by the limitations of the current housing market. Our organizations and teams are grappling with the impacts of the housing crisis on our employees, clients, business operations, and our community. The findings of this report demonstrate the interconnected nature of these needs and impacts.

Our guidance to the project team was to take a human-centered approach, treating each survey and interview participant as an individual to understand their specific housing needs and impacts. In just over nine months, the team successfully connected with approximately 8% of Napa's farmworkers through surveys and interviews. One common theme that emerged from this assessment was the pride that all participants, including farmworkers, industry groups, employers, and growers, have in their work in Napa Valley. The farmworkers, in particular, expressed a deep connection to this pride,



Photograph: Sarah Anne Risk

reflecting the Valley's reputation for hands-on skilled labor and a culture of hard work, resilience, and dedication. Despite financial, social, and cultural barriers, the farmworkers' resilience and dedication to their work make them the cornerstone of this small but mighty valley. Their contributions and commitment to engaging in necessary agricultural work not only emphasize their importance but also foster the agricultural prosperity we see today.

This assessment also highlights the willingness of growers, employers, and industry groups to participate and collaborate, underscoring the urgent shared desire to address housing issues, access, and barriers for the farm labor workforce. The collective pride in and dedication to this workforce are crucial to the ongoing success of Napa Valley's agricultural industry. We believe this report tells an important story our community needs to know about who is working as a farmworker in Napa, what tradeoffs they are making to do so, what barriers they encounter trying to access local housing, and what will happen if housing challenges continue or get worse. It further provides insight into the lengths the industry and employer sector are going to try and address the situation now, and the many barriers and obstacles they face in trying to solve a shared problem individually. We are proud to recognize their efforts and wholeheartedly agree with their consistent recognition that more needs to be done to ensure farmworkers have access to housing in Napa Valley. The multifaceted look at farmworker housing needs and impacts in this report forms our call to collective action: to update community perceptions about farmworkers and their housing needs, identify challenges to be addressed through collaboration and innovation, develop a comprehensive, multi-jurisdiction action plan, and ready our community to make important investments in its future.

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Table of Contents

Foreword	01
Executive Summary	03
Methodology	07
FHNIA Project Timeline	09
Distinctly Different Workforces & How the Lack of Housing is Shaping the Industry	10
Tradeoffs to Making Rent & Retention Challenges	20
High Barriers to Housing Navigation & Employers Providing Social Services	28
If We Do Nothing	34
Opportunities for Collective Action	41
Acknowledgements	46
References	47



Photograph: Suzanne Beker Bronk

Executive Summary

Rich soils, a Mediterranean climate, and skilled craftsmanship in all phases of wine production make the Napa Valley one of the premier wine regions in the world. Before any wine makes it to local, national, or international grocery stores and restaurants, Napa's farmworker labor force is cultivating soil, planting, training, and pruning vines. That labor force is approximately 9,000 strong, peaking at 11,000 during harvest season, and dropping to 4,800 in winter months. In sheer numbers, farmworkers account for just 5% of the total workforce in Napa County, but that labor force is at the core of 99% of the gross agricultural production of the Napa Valley.

There are increasing shortages in the local farm labor sector, primarily driven by a lack of housing that is affordable to Napa Valley's farmworkers. These shortages pose significant challenges to Napa's renowned wine industry. Hidden within these housing challenges are farmworker families and individuals making unhealthy trade-offs to make rent and facing unique barriers to accessing housing at all. The magnitude of these challenges and their potential impact on Napa Valley's wine industry must be understood and responded to. The Napa Valley has a long and unique history of public-private partnership to support the housing needs of its farmworkers. In 2002, the Napa County Board of Supervisors created County Service No. 4 (CSA 4 – see **Box 1**, page 6) to provide funding for farmworker housing programs. This important funding continues to provide important nightly lodging to single male farmworkers. More is needed now, because the make-up of the workforce has changed, with more women farmworkers and most farmworkers providing for their families with children.

The Napa Valley is a relatively small area of agricultural land comprised of 46,419 producing acres of farmland, which is less than 30% of Tuscany's wine region, and less than 15% of the Bordeaux region. The wine produced here accounts for less than 0.4% of the wine made world-wide, and just 4% of all wine produced in California. But that small footprint yields a mighty economic engine: The high price of Napa Valley wines accounts for over 25% of California's total wine revenues. The Napa Valley wine industry and related businesses have an annual economic impact of more than \$9.4 billion locally, and nearly \$34 billion across the United States. The Napa Valley wine industry is also responsible for 44,000 jobs locally and nearly 190,000 nationwide. To safeguard local and national interests tied to the economic vitality of the Napa Valley wine industry, residents, business owners, and policy makers in Napa Valley must make new investments in housing for farmworkers to ensure the industry's future.

This report provides four key findings to inform collective action:



DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT WORKFORCES & LACK OF HOUSING IS SHAPING THE INDUSTRY

The “Farm Labor Workforce” includes **two distinct groups** with different needs. One group consists of farmworkers who are employed **year-round**, while the other group includes those who work for less than eleven (11) months a year and **annually/seasonally return**. Among the latter group, there is a growing segment of farmworkers who work under an H-2A Visa. Across both groups, the common perception of the farmworker as an unaccompanied (single) male is outdated. The vast majority of farmworkers working in Napa Valley are parents and provide for households their under-18 and adult children reside in. In an effort to provide greater financial stability and guard against seasonal labor shortages, employers are offering year-round work and shifting to smaller, permanent farm labor crews. Employers are also adjusting shift schedules to accommodate childcare needs and have raised wages and benefits to offset high housing costs and long commutes. These changes in the composition of farm labor jobs reflect how housing issues are shaping the industry.



TRADEOFFS TO MAKE RENT & RETENTION CHALLENGES

Farmworkers working in Napa County face significant challenges in terms of housing and commuting, resulting in **unhealthy tradeoffs to make rent**. Workers endure daily commutes of up to four hours roundtrip or live in overcrowded short-term rental situations. Many maintain a second full-time household for their families in distant counties, due to the unavailability of housing that is affordable near their workplaces. These difficulties also limit their access to educational and career advancement opportunities after work. Employers are increasingly concerned about these tradeoffs, as they have led to significant retention challenges, with long-tenured workers retiring and fewer younger workers entering the farm labor workforce. To address these retention challenges, some employers are turning to Farm Labor Companies (FLCs) to secure “guaranteed labor.” FLCs are seeking H-2A Visa workers to meet their contract labor demands, in order to fulfill the demanding schedules of agricultural production that produce the high-quality grapes and wine that make Napa Valley a world-class wine region and destination.



HIGH BARRIERS TO HOUSING NAVIGATION & EMPLOYERS PROVIDING SOCIAL SERVICES

Resolving the housing challenges faced by farmworkers, especially those who return annually or seasonally, is significantly complicated by the **unique obstacles they face to finding housing**. These include language access issues, the substantial time and cost required to submit multiple housing applications each season, and the detrimental impacts of informal leases and shared rooms. Consequently, long-tenured farmworkers returning annually to Napa County for over ten years often lack a formal rental history, making it challenging for landlords to consider them as good prospective tenants in an exceptionally tight housing market. In response, employers are increasingly taking on the additional responsibility of formally and informally providing social services like housing navigation and application support in an effort to avoid turnover among a highly skilled annually/seasonally returning labor force.



IF WE DO NOTHING

The primary concern raised by those interviewed for this report was that if we do nothing, the value proposition of working in Napa will disappear. Farmworkers and employers alike expressed concerns that without a sufficient supply of skilled year-round and seasonal farmworkers, quality will decline, costs will increase, and mechanization will become more prevalent. These outcomes pose an existential threat to the brand identity and value proposition of Napa Valley's wine industry, which relies on boutique, highly skilled hand labor.

Napa is a model for agricultural responsibility and a leader in social sustainability. At this time, more investment is needed to ensure the future success of Napa Valley and its farm labor workforce. The housing crisis is impacting workers across all sectors here and in much of the State. More affordable housing is needed for all of these sectors to maintain a strong economy and vibrant community. Within this broader context, Napa Valley farmworkers face unique obstacles and challenges to accessing and maintaining housing. These obstacles can be overcome through coordinated effort and targeted investment. Opportunities for collective action are included on pages 41-44 of this report.



Photograph: Suzanne Beker Bronk

Box 1: County Service Area No. 4

With the support of local industry, including the Napa Valley Vintners, Napa Valley Grapegrowers, and Napa County Farm Bureau, the Napa County Board of Supervisors established County Service No. 4 (CSA No.4) in 2002. This was created as a way to provide funding for services related to farmworker housing in the County of Napa. These services include acquiring, building, leasing, and providing maintenance or operations for farmworker housing owned or leased by a public agency whose principal purpose is to develop or facilitate the development of farmworker housing in Napa County.

In this unique model, vineyard owners with land containing at least one acre of planted vineyards assess themselves to fund the maintenance and operation of the three county-owned farmworker centers in or near the cities of Calistoga, St. Helena, and Napa. Owners cast their vote to reauthorize the per planted vineyard acre assessment every five years, and it is assessed annually. For fiscal year 2024-2025, the assessment is \$14.00. In 2022, CSA No. 4 received 86.6% approval from vineyard owners, demonstrating the success of the public-private partnership model more than twenty years after its establishment. Since 2002, this unique public-private farmworker housing finance model has generated over \$10 million dollars in funding for the three Centers.



The River Ranch Farmworker Center in St. Helena, CA

Methodology

Research for the Farmworker Housing Needs and Impacts Assessment was conducted over ten months, between August 2023 and May 2024. User-centered data collection methods included both quantitative and qualitative research to gather insights on farmworker housing needs in Napa County.

Farmworker Surveys

A total of 683 farmworkers were surveyed, representing 7.5% of the Napa Valley farm labor workforce. Surveys were conducted across 40 vineyard worksite and outreach events in collaboration with industry group and employer support, including farm labor contractors, vineyard management companies, wineries, and key trade groups such as the Napa Valley Vintners, Napa Valley Grapegrowers, and the Napa Valley Farmworker Foundation. Bilingual, bicultural support and survey navigation were crucial to effectively collect paper surveys. To alleviate privacy concerns, surveys were anonymous, conducted in group settings and did not ask about immigration status. The survey was designed to take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, allowing farmworkers to complete it on breaks, for example. Survey staff coordinated with farm labor supervisors and crew leaders to determine work schedules and locations for conducting the surveys. Surveys were conducted across the nine (9) months research period to ensure a representative balance of farmworkers across the summer, harvest, winter, and spring work seasons.

Key Informant Interviews

Sixteen Key Informant Interviews (KII's) were conducted with community-based organizations, employers, service providers, and industry groups. Four additional KII's were added late in the project and conducted with farmworkers who work year-round and who return annually/seasonally. The industry and employer interviews explored: (1) Insights on Farmworker Housing Availability, (2) Transportation Trends & Commute Times, (3) H-2A Visa Program, (4) Housing-Related Incentives, (5) Affordable Housing Shortage: Financial Impacts on Employers & Employment Turnover, and (6) Policy Suggestions. The farmworker interviews explored: (1) Current Housing Situations, (2) Housing Conditions, (3) Housing and Homelessness, (4) Transportation, (5) Future Housing.



683

FARMWORKER SURVEYS

20

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

40

VINEYARD SITE VISITS & OUTREACH EVENTS

Methodology

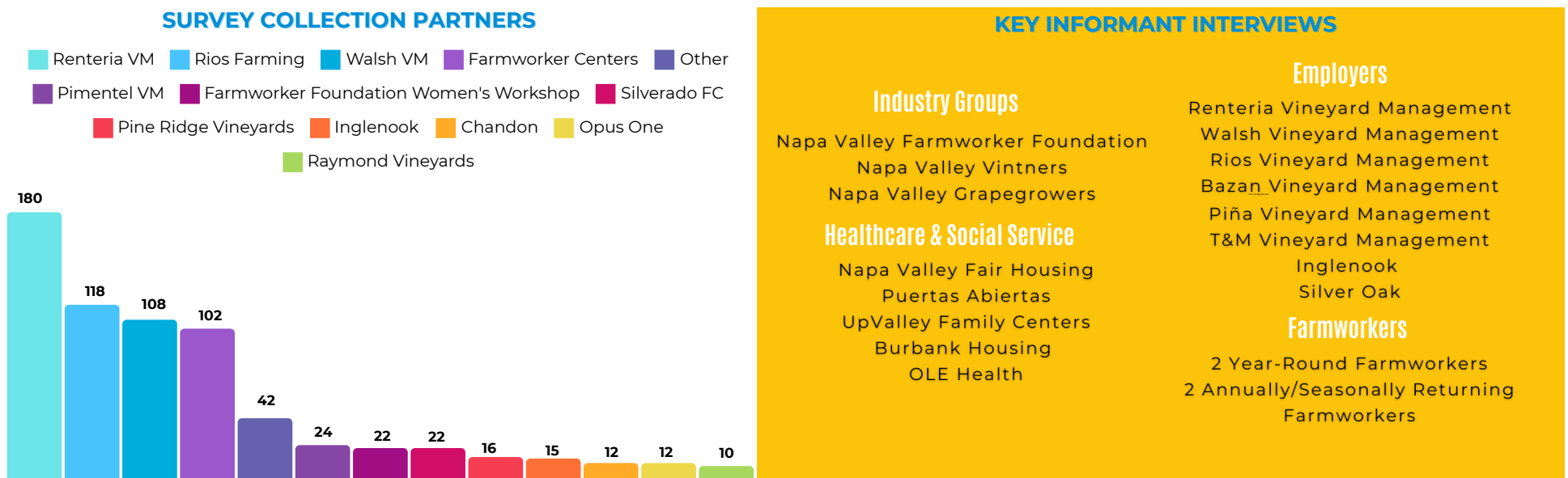
The initial project plan included two design and collection methods that were ultimately abandoned. The first was an online/cloud-based survey tool administered utilizing Wi-Fi and cellular enabled tablets and cell phones. Language access and translation barriers, combined with challenges accessing Wi-Fi and cellular services in the fields led to an immediate shift to exclusively collecting data via paper surveys. This adaptation created unanticipated data entry capacity challenges (and extra project cost) and overall contributed to a one-month delay in the project schedule.

Challenges & Adaptations

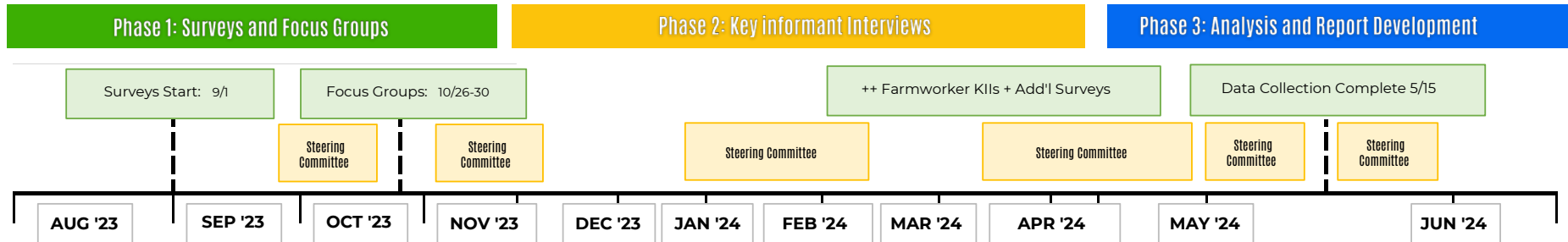
The second collection method abandoned was a series of focus groups with farmworkers living in and out of Napa County. The focus groups were intended to be conducted by groups of ten to twelve at locations central to nearby worksites. Dinner was provided for all participants. Researchers solicited participants via survey outreach and confirmed participants the week of each planned focus group. Despite significant planning and coordination, none of the farmworkers who signed up for the focus groups showed up to the meetings. Issues with carpools were the primary reason for the inability to attend, followed by changing work schedules and no-shows. To substitute for the focus group qualitative data, four farmworker KII's were conducted in April and May.

Community Project Partners

This report is made possible thanks to the support of industry groups, employers, and other stakeholders whose commitment to this study and their workforce amplified our capacity to reach so many farmworkers. The collaboration reflects the shared deep desire to promote and enhance collective action to support Napa Valley farmworkers with accessing and maintaining housing.



Farmworker Housing Needs & Impacts Assessment Project Timeline



Substantive content : Focus Groups and KII's ID best KII Interview partners		Follow-up content Look & Feel Direction		Review/revise draft report; Plan and prepare launch/release	
Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3	
Survey Project Goal:	500	Industry Groups	3	Analysis Complete	15-Jun
Surveys to date:	683	Employers	8	Draft Findings Draft	20-Jun
Surveys Entered:	683	Healthcare & Social Service	5	Look & Feel Final	20-Jun
Data Entry completion:	5/15/2024	Farmworkers	4	Report	15-Jul
Focus Group Project Goal	4			Launch/Distribution	15-Jul



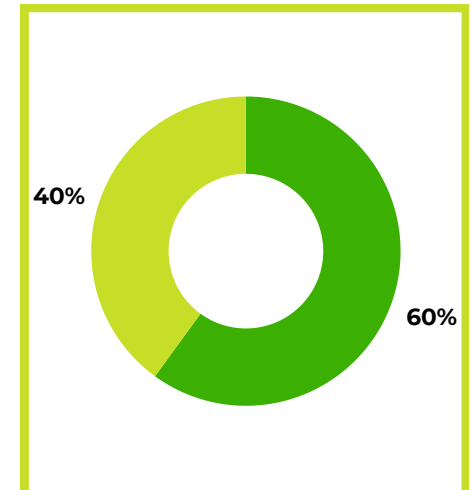
DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT WORKFORCES & LACK OF HOUSING IS SHAPING THE INDUSTRY

WHO are the Farmworkers of Napa County?

Understanding the housing needs of farmworkers starts with understanding the composition of the farmworker labor force. This information forms the basis for comprehending the housing challenges they face and how these challenges affect the Napa Valley Wine industry as a whole.

The "Farmworker Labor workforce" in Napa County is made up of **two distinct groups** with different needs. The first are farmworkers employed twelve (12) months out of the year. The second are farmworkers employed less than eleven (11) months out of the year who return for work – often to the same employer - annually and seasonally. Within this second group there is a growing subset of workers who annually and seasonally return under what is known as an “H-2A Visa” (see **Box 2**, page 19). The distinctions between these two groups include significant median age differences, household sizes, lengths of time working in Napa County, languages spoken, current housing situations and long-term desires for better housing solutions. Therefore, this report will break out key data points by “Year-Round Farmworkers” and “Annually/Seasonally Returning Farmworkers.”

Common perceptions of the farmworker workforce being primarily composed of single, unaccompanied males is at odds with the findings of this assessment. Three-quarters of all survey respondents are parents, many with children under 18. Both groups experience high barriers to accessing housing that is affordable for themselves and their families, and growing labor shortages are a direct result. In response, employers are increasingly moving to smaller, year-round farm labor crews and contracting for larger seasonal crews through farm labor and vineyard management companies. This shift to smaller, year-round crews is one of the many ways housing issues are shaping the industry. The shift is necessary due to the unforgiving windows of agriculture, where delaying or prolonging early-season work (such as pruning and suckering) can have cascading and compounding crop growth and cost impacts throughout the harvest cycle.



40% of farmworkers in Napa Valley work here year-round.

60% of farmworkers in Napa Valley return annually/seasonally for work.

Distinctly Different Workforces & A Lack of Housing Is Shaping the Industry

Uncertainty and absence of labor at the start of the season effectively drive-up cost and risk to crop quality all the way through to harvest. Smaller permanent crews ensure base-level labor is assured. Many employers noted this shift was necessary to retain long-tenured, highly skilled farmworkers who had been with their companies often for ten years or more and who could no longer cover rent during the work lapse between November harvest and early Spring resumption.

Farmworker housing issues are shaping the industry beyond the shift to year-round crews and outsourced seasonal labor. In addition to a shift to offer year-round work, employers describe adjusting shifts to accommodate crews with long commutes (more on this in Finding 2), addressing childcare needs (more on this in Finding 3), and the practical need for farmworkers to seek additional part time shifts with other employers during a single day to make ends meet. Across the board employers noted recent and consistent increases in wages and benefits are being offered to offset the high cost of housing and long commutes.

Within the annually/seasonally returning group, there is a small and growing subset of farmworkers hired under the H-2A program. Overall fewer small wine producers directly employ H-2A farmworkers compared to vineyard management companies (VMC's) strong and growing hiring of these workers. All of the VMC's interviewed for this report indicated they use the program, and H-2A farmworkers represent between 10-20% of their current labor force and expect that percentage to continue to grow if not double in the coming five years.



Employers are experiencing labor shortages as housing costs increase. The lack of housing that is affordable or available to farmworkers is shaping the industry through scheduling adaptations, wage and benefit increases, the transition to permanent crews, and increasing use of H-2A Visa workers.

“I don’t think that we are able to do anything as a specific winery or company to change the housing impact on the labor supply. The only thing we control is the demand. And so, we are responding with increases in salary, because that is the relationship between supply and demand.

The other thing we’ve done is, since 2014, we have moved away from hiring people seasonally. We push for them to stay year-round because retention is a big problem. We say, “OK, you can work here 12 months a year. We will find something for you to do even if it is the middle of the Winter.” It is a way for us to keep people more permanently, and rent is more affordable for them when they can do it year-round versus seasonally.

But it is amazing how rental prices have gone up. [Salary increases] are really just a tiny effort compared to what is needed in terms of overcoming the rental price increases.”

-Employer Key Informant Interview

DIFFERENCES IN THE WORKFORCE

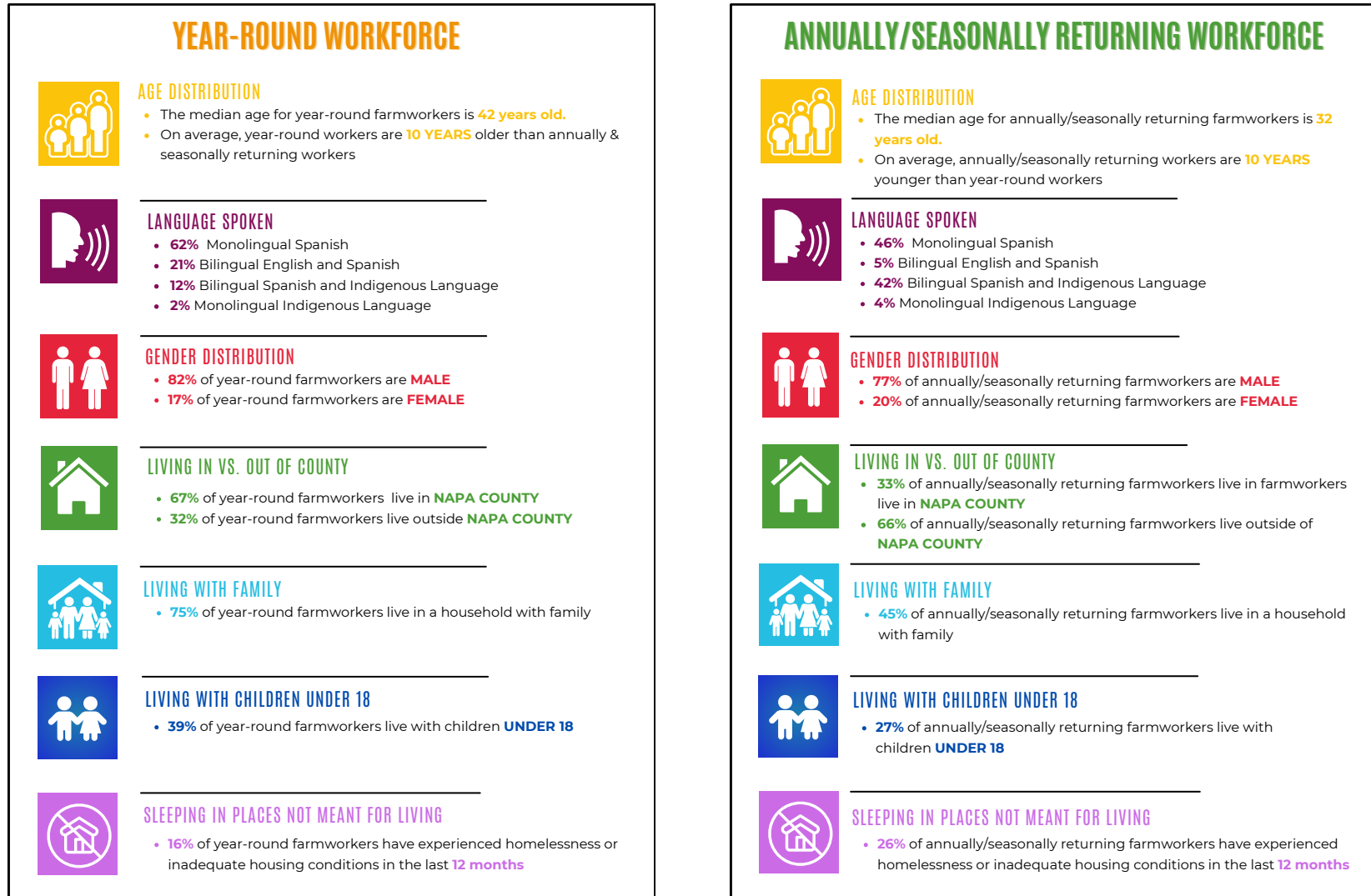


Fig 1.1: Differences in the Workforce

Farmworkers working year-round made up 40% of all survey respondents and those who annually and seasonally return made up 60%. The year-round and seasonal workforce groups share some similarities, such as having a significant percentage of individuals living with family members, including children under 18 years of age. However, there are also distinct differences and needs. The annually/seasonally returning farmworkers are younger, more likely to live outside of Napa County, more likely to speak an indigenous language, and are more likely to experience sleeping in places not meant for living during the course of their working season.

LENGTH OF TIME WORKING IN NAPA

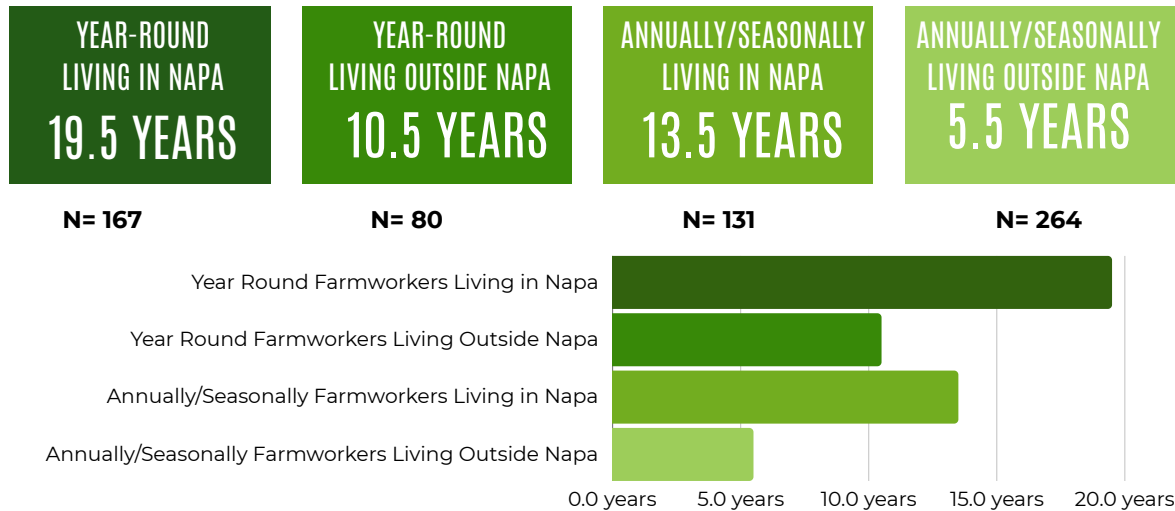


Fig 1.2: Length of Time Working In Napa

Farmworkers living in Napa County are a more experienced labor force than farmworkers who live outside of the county. On average, farmworkers living in-county have five to six years longer work tenures than their out-of-county counterparts. These long-tenured workers have received more training and are essential members of highly skilled and effective vineyard crews. This data indicates a strong correlation between access to housing in Napa County and employment tenure.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA - AGE

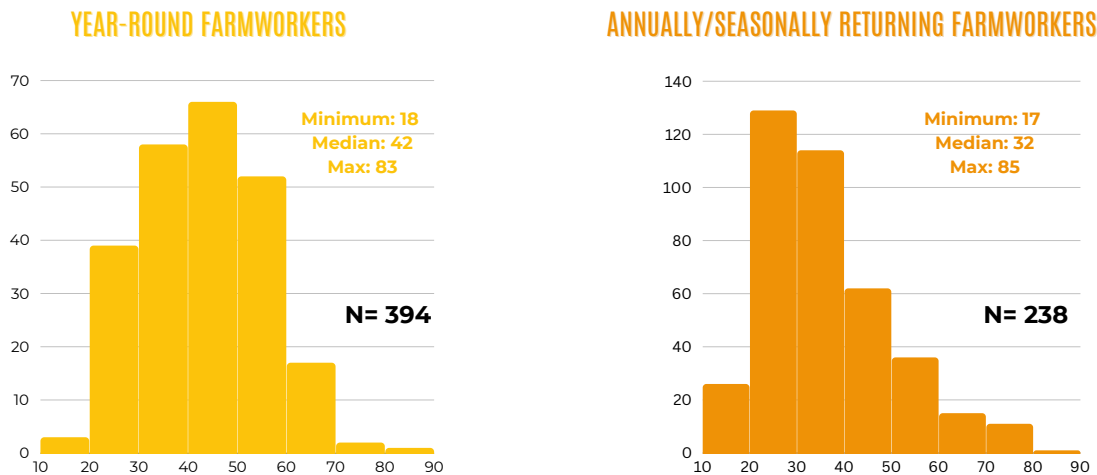
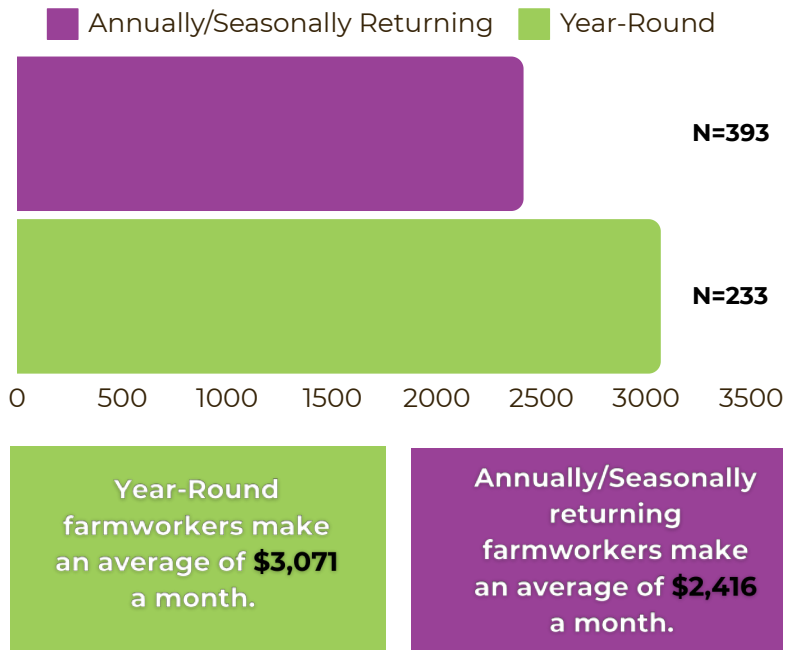


Fig 1.3: Demographic Data - Age

The year-round farmworker labor force is getting older as fewer young adults enter the domestic farm labor workforce. On average, farmworkers who annually and seasonally return are around ten years younger than their year-round counterparts. As older, more experienced farmworkers - the majority of whom live in Napa County - retire, employers are hiring younger, less experienced workers living out of County or here under H-2A Visas to make up for the loss.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA - INCOME

Average Monthly Income



Area Median Income for Napa County (2023)

Adapted from California Housing and Community Development

	One-Person Household	Two-Person Household	Four-Person Household
Area Median Income	\$90,700	\$103,700	\$129,600
Extremely Low (<30% AMI)	\$28,050	\$32,050	\$40,050
Very Low (31–50% AMI)	\$46,750	\$53,400	\$66,750
Low (51–80% AMI)	\$74,700	\$85,400	\$106,700
Moderate (81–120% AMI)	\$108,850	\$124,400	\$155,500
Above Moderate (>120% AMI)	Over \$108,850	Over \$124,400	Over \$155,500

Source: 2024 State of Housing in Napa Valley Report

Fig 1.4 Demographic Data - Income

Another area of significant distinction between the two groups is income. Year-round farmworkers report monthly incomes averaging \$3,071 per month, roughly 25% higher than their annually/seasonally returning counterparts. The year-round average across survey responders aligns almost exactly with US Census Bureau for farmworkers (\$3,049) data. By comparison, Area Median Income for Napa County is \$90,700 for a one-person household and \$129,600 for a four-person household. Farmworkers fall between extremely low (\$28,050) and very low (\$46,750) area median income.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA - GENDER DISTRIBUTION

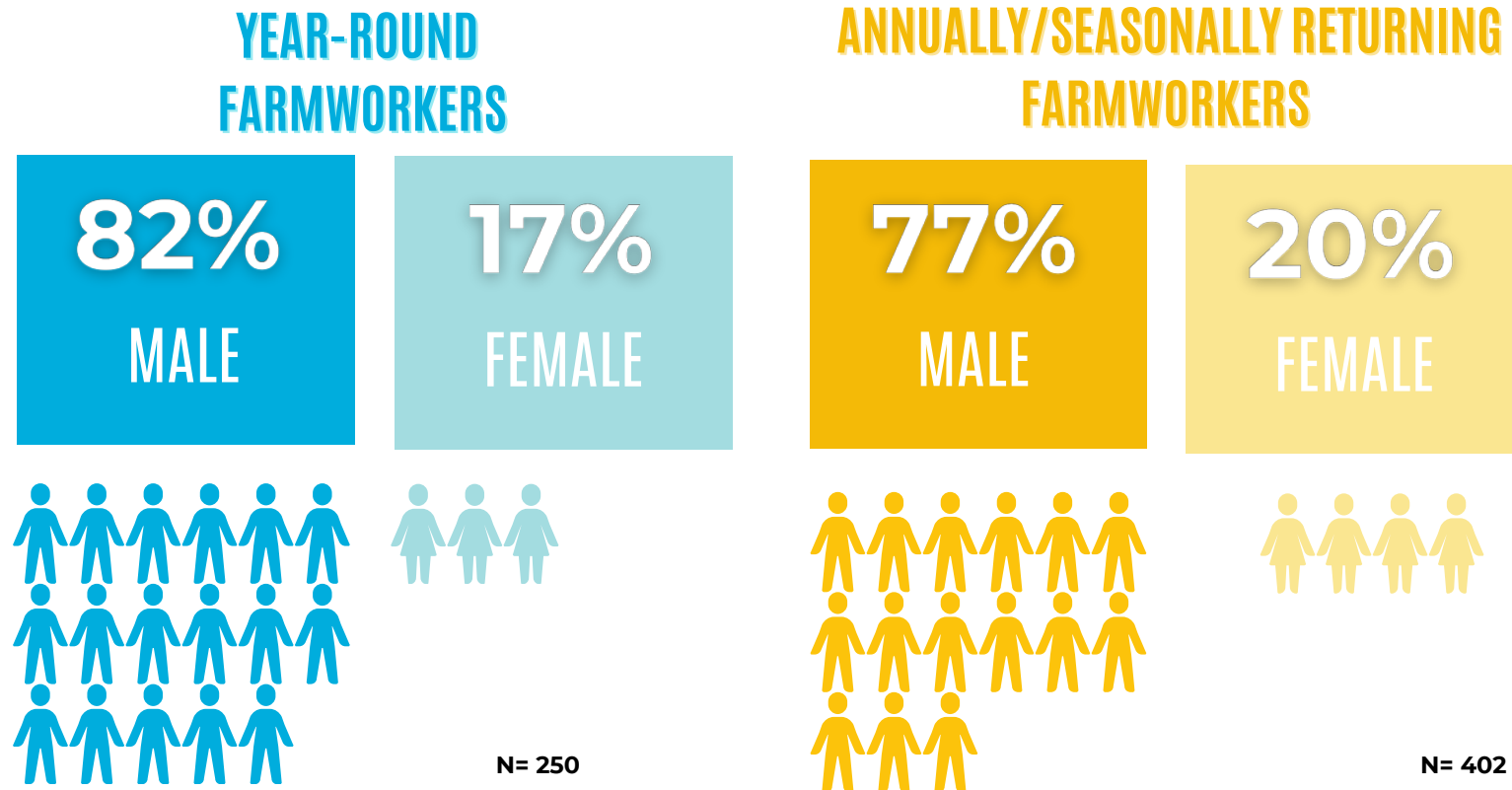


Fig 1.5: Demographic Data - Gender Distribution

Although the gender distribution is nearly equal among both year-round and annual and seasonally returning farmworkers, the female workforce is growing. Many of the employers interviewed noted the growing numbers of women in the workforce and use of all-female crews. Family composition was (see Fig 1.6 & 1.7 for more on children) was similar across male and female respondents.

FARMWORKERS WHO HAVE CHILDREN

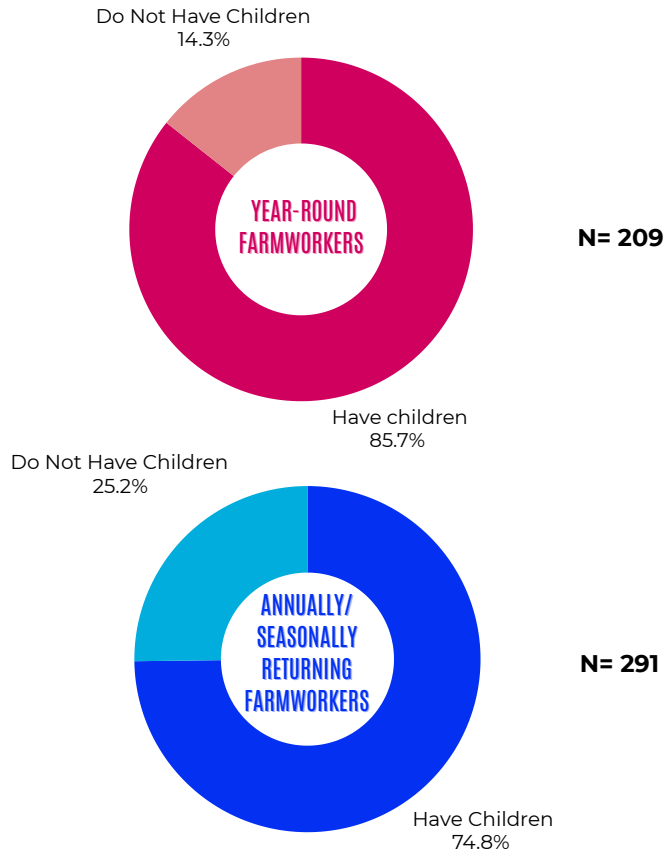
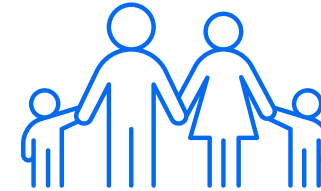


Fig 1.6: Farmworkers Who Have Children

The majority of farmworkers working in the Napa Valley have children. Three-quarters of all survey respondents indicated they are parents. Common perceptions of the farmworker workforce being composed of single, unaccompanied males is at odds with study findings.

FARMWORKERS LIVING WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18

YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS



N= 252

39% live with children under 18 years of age.

ANNUALLY & SEASONALLY RETURNING FARMWORKERS



N= 409

27% live with children under 18 years of age.

Fig 1.7 . Year-round farmworkers are more likely to live with their minor children than annually/seasonally returning farmworkers. Those not living with their minor children indicated they would prefer to do so, but lack access to suitable, affordable family housing close enough to their workplace. **These farmworkers are often supporting two housing situations:** a primary location for their family, and a secondary location for themselves close to work, often with other single adults.

TYPE OF CURRENT HOUSING UNIT

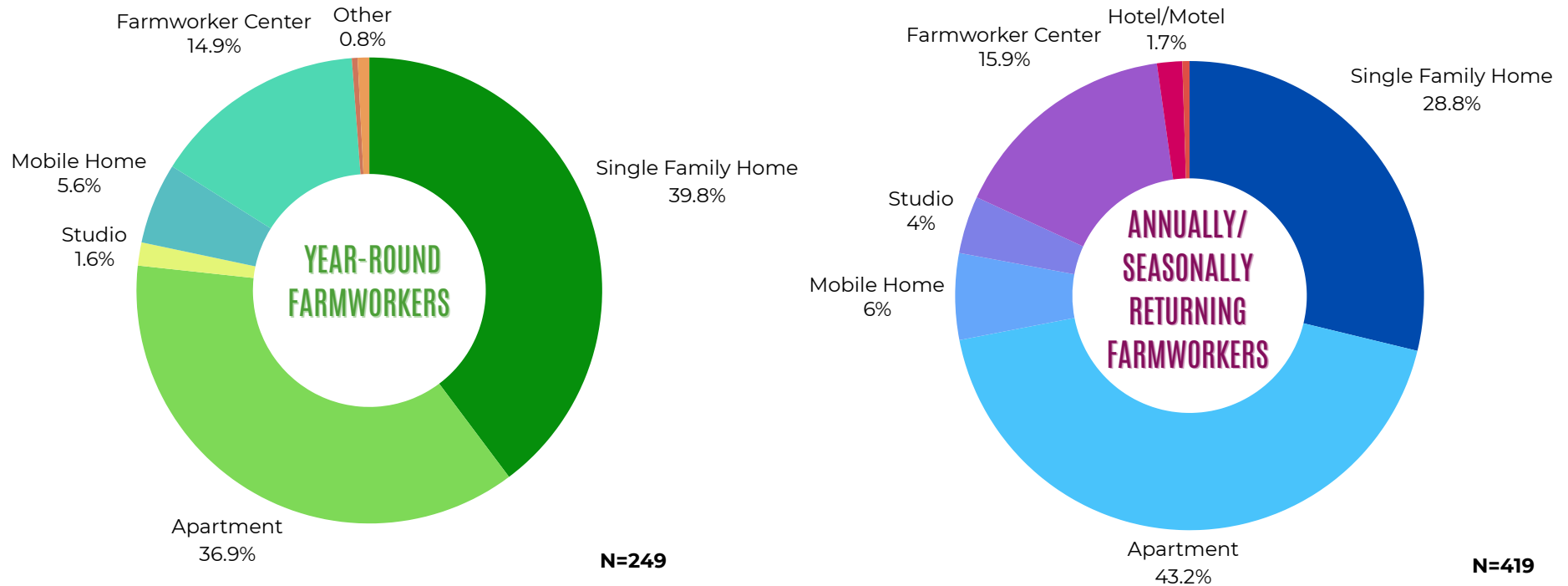
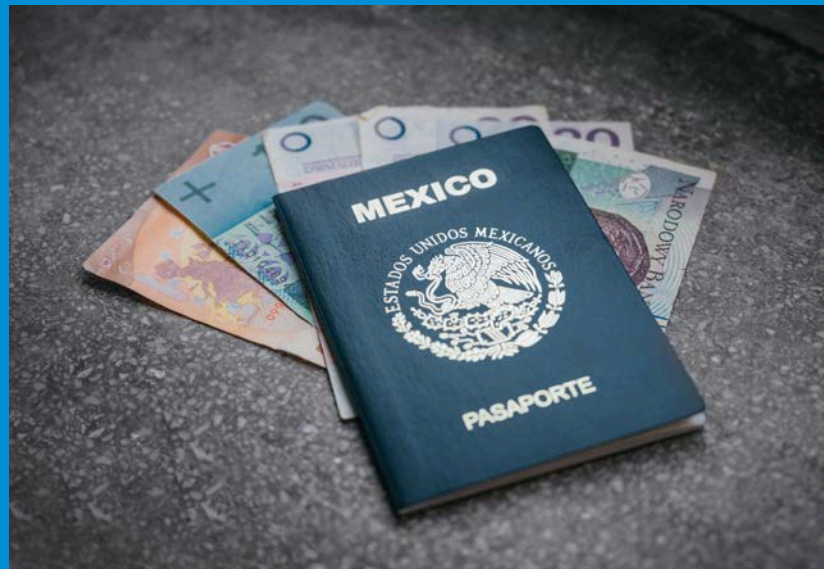


Fig 1.8: Type of Current Housing Unit

Farmworkers live in a wide variety of housing unit types, most commonly in single family homes and apartments. Key informant interviews with farmworkers noted the certainty of year-round and steady income provides more opportunity to secure a single-family home or apartment for themselves and their family, reducing the burden of maintaining two housing situations (see Fig 1.7). Very few survey respondents were homeowners (>8%) and most report living in overcrowded households in order to afford single-family home and apartment rents (see Fig 2.5). *Data in chart not labeled for Year-Round respondents: Emergency Shelter (0.4%). Data in chart not labeled for Annually/Seasonally Returning respondents: Other (0.5%)*

Box 2: H-2A Visa Program Benefits & Costs

The H-2A visa program enables foreign workers to contribute to the United States' agricultural industry by performing seasonal or temporary agricultural labor. Prior to receiving H-2A visas, employers must undergo a certification process from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to ensure that the employment of foreign workers will not have a negative impact on the wages or jobs of domestic workers. The program requires employers of H-2A Visa farmworkers to provide housing and furnishings (“livable fittings”) as well as transportation both from the home country to the worksite, and daily transport from housing site to work site. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the demand for H-2A visas from agricultural employers across the US, accompanied by rising wages for temporary foreign workers. While this has resulted in higher labor costs for agricultural producers, it also reflects the growing importance of foreign labor in sustaining the agricultural sector.





TRADEOFFS TO MAKE RENT AND RETENTION CHALLENGES

HOW is the high cost of housing impacting Napa County Farmworkers?

Farmworkers in Napa County face significant housing and commuting challenges, which force them to make **unhealthy tradeoffs to afford rent**. As much as 16% of the farm labor workforce in Napa endure daily commutes of up to four hours roundtrip. Many more live in overcrowded short-term rental situations. The vast majority of farmworkers surveyed have families and are living in intergenerational households, leveraging 3-4 working adult paychecks to meet rent or mortgage payments. Other household arrangements see larger numbers of individual adults living in overcrowded housing situations because they have to maintain a second full-time household for their spouse and children in distant counties due to the unavailability of affordable family-appropriate housing in-County. These farmworkers in particular experience disproportionately high rates of episodic homelessness following long workdays when the commute time would eliminate sleeping time, and so they spend nights sleeping in their cars or other places not meant for human habitation.

Long commutes require working parents to leave their homes between 4-5am and not return until after 7pm, functionally separating them from the waking hours of their young children. These challenges also limit their access to educational and career advancement opportunities. Employers are increasingly concerned about these tradeoffs, as they have led to retention challenges with long-tenured workers retiring and fewer younger workers entering the farm labor workforce. To address critical retention challenges, many employers are turning to Vineyard Management Companies (“VMC’s”) and Farm Labor Companies (“FLC’s”) to ensure labor is available throughout the growing and harvest season. VMC’s and FLC’s are in turn increasingly seeking H-2A Visa workers to meet their contract labor demands and fulfill the demanding schedules of agricultural production, which are essential for producing the high-quality grapes and wine that make Napa Valley a world-class wine region and destination.



**Informal
carpools cause
entire crews
missing work
when the driver
is sick or the car
needs repair.**

Tradeoffs To Make Rent & Retention Challenges

Long commutes go beyond causing family separation and require tradeoffs that negatively impact access to healthy food. Farmworkers who have to commute from early in the morning to late at night do not have enough time to prepare and cook fresh meats, fruits, and vegetables. As a result, they end up eating a lot of non-perishable or fast food while on the road because they have limited access to refrigeration or reheating equipment during the workday.

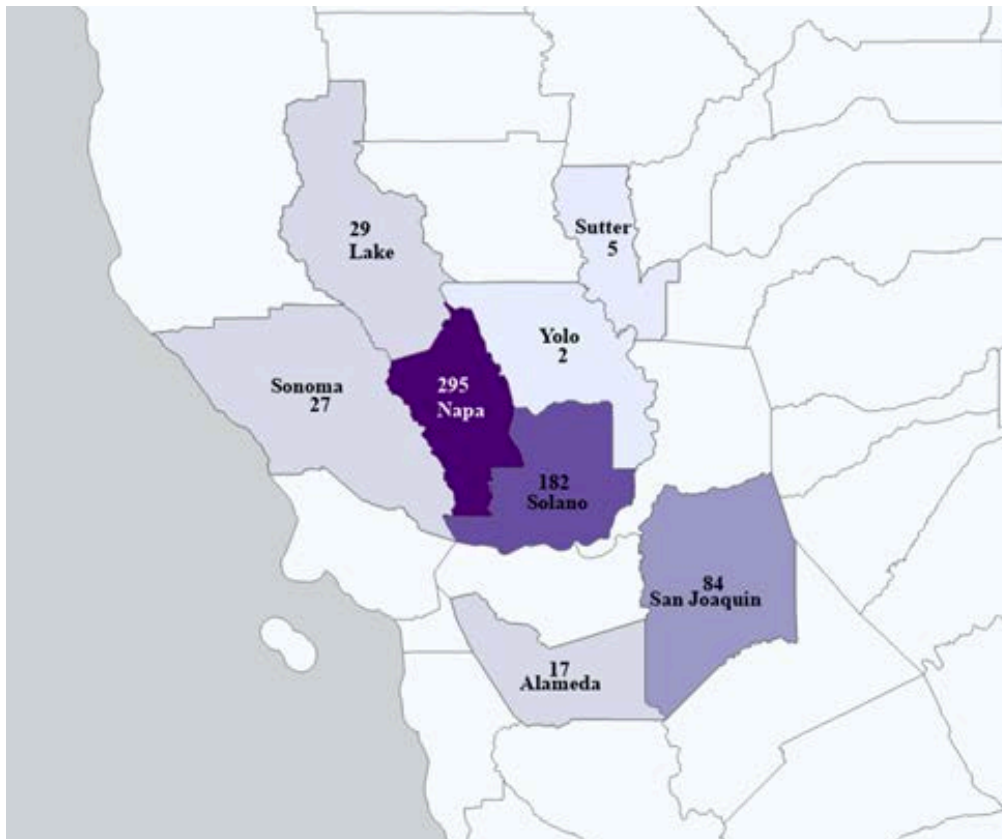
The tradeoffs to make rent that annually/seasonally returning farmworkers make are evident in their responses to questions about basic safety and connectivity. This includes feeling safe in their neighborhood, the safety of their belongings, and access to personal privacy. 89% of year-round farmworkers reported feeling safe in their neighborhood, while only 54% of annually/seasonally returning farmworkers felt the same sense of safety. Only 25% of annually/seasonally returning farmworkers, and slightly over half of year-round farmworkers, reported having access to Wi-Fi in their living situations. Internet access is an important tool for taking full advantage of opportunities in education, employment, health, social services, and the production and dissemination of knowledge and digital content.



Annually/seasonally returning farmworkers are more likely to live outside of Napa County, in overcrowded conditions, unsafe neighborhoods, and experience sleeping in a place not meant for living during the year.

LIVING IN VS. OUT OF THE COUNTY

FARMWORKER RESIDENCE BY COUNTY



67% OF YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS LIVE IN NAPA COUNTY

66% OF ANNUALLY/SEASONALLY RETURNING FARMWORKERS LIVE OUTSIDE OF NAPA COUNTY

33% OF ANNUALLY/SEASONALLY RETURNING FARMWORKERS LIVE IN NAPA COUNTY

32% OF YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS LIVE OUTSIDE OF NAPA COUNTY

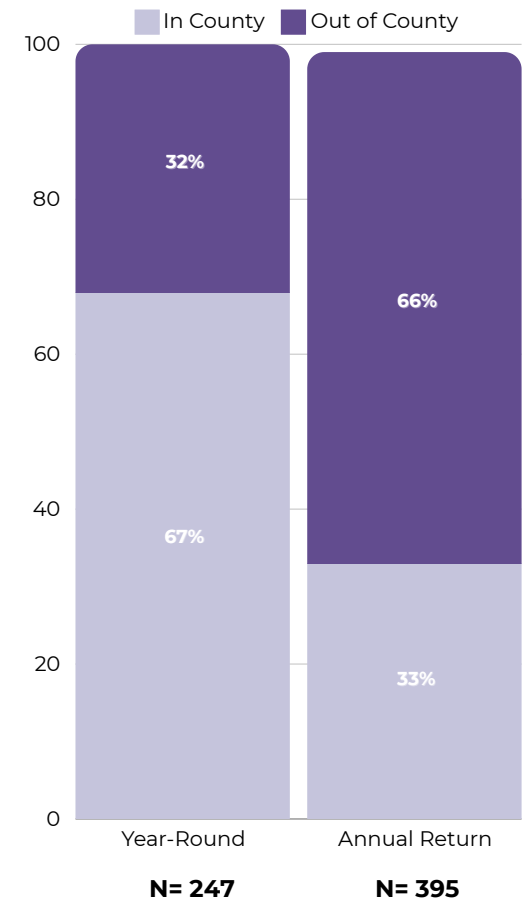


Fig 2.1: Living In vs. Out of County

46% of farmworkers survey respondents live in Napa County. Those living in-County primarily work year-round, while those living out of County work annually/seasonally and are coming from as far away as Sutter, Alameda, and San Joaquin Counties. Daily commutes take more than a physical toll on farmworkers. Farmworkers told us they are interested in learning English and taking other continuing education classes to advance their careers, but do not have enough time in the day to do so between working and commuting hours.

TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

HOW DO FARMWORKERS TRAVEL TO NAPA EACH DAY?

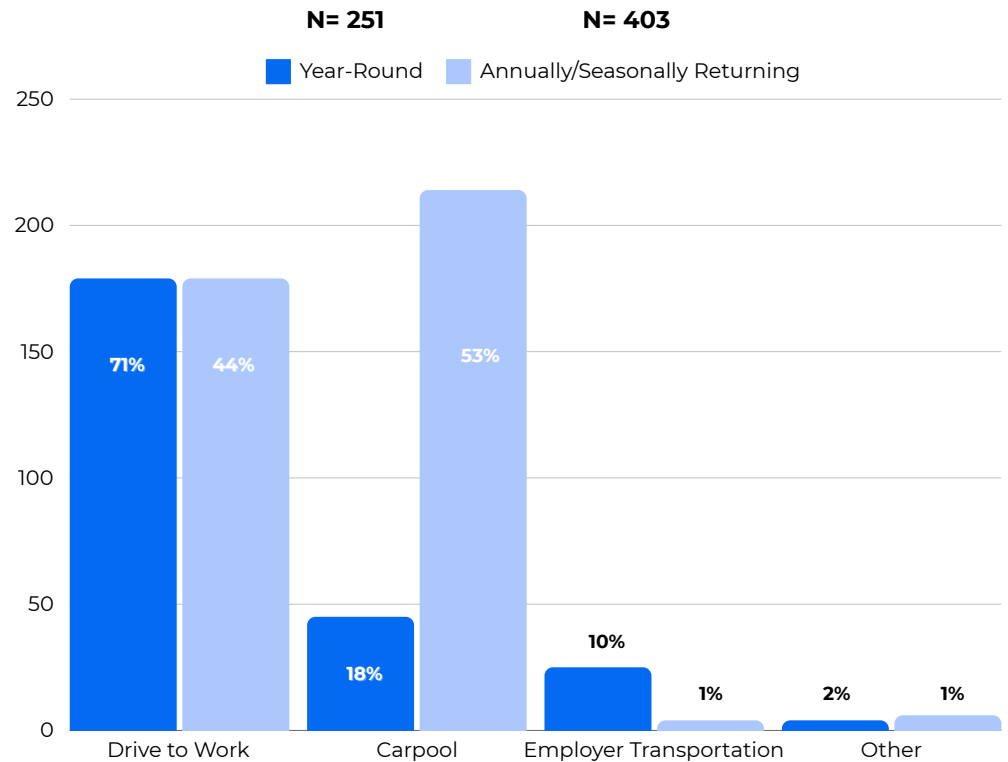
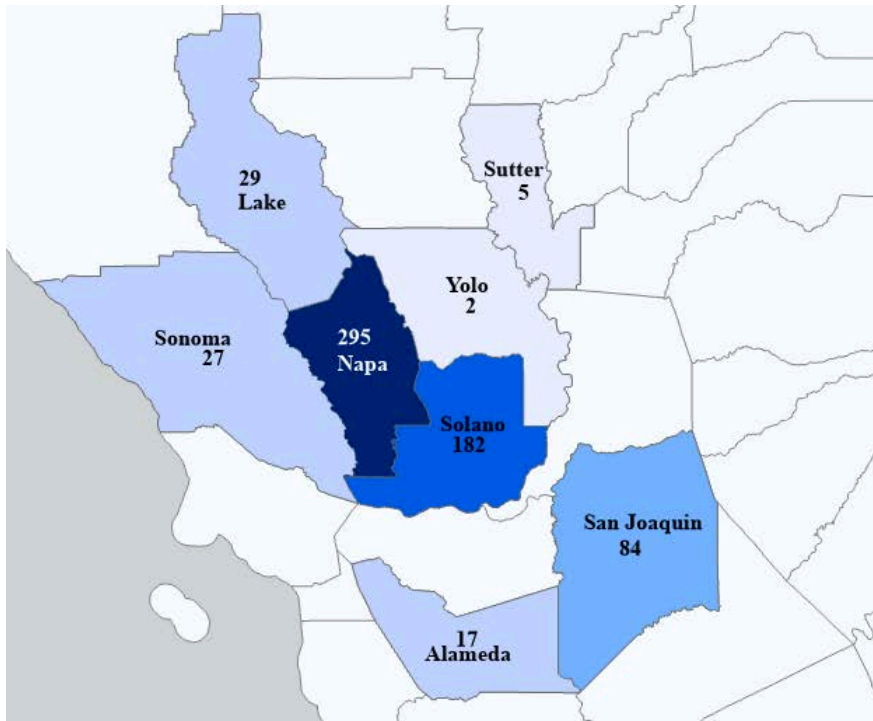


Fig 2.2: Transportation Trends

For farmworkers living in Napa County, the primary method of transportation to work is a solo car trip. For those living out of County, carpool is the primary method. Very few farmworkers note having access to employer provided transportation. At the same time, employers identify long commutes as significant challenges for farmworkers, noting long hours on the road impact workplace productivity and job satisfaction. State and Federal labor laws create significant regulatory barriers that make employer-provided transportation extremely administratively complicated.

INTERGENERATIONAL HOUSEHOLDS

YEAR-ROUND VS. ANNUALLY/SEASONALLY RETURNING FARMWORKERS

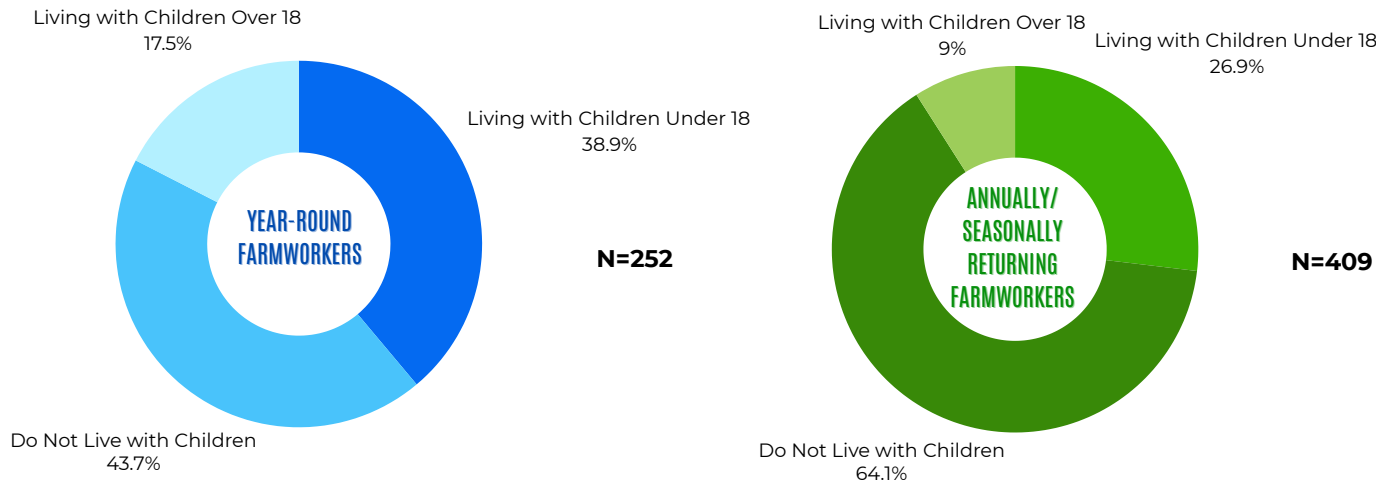


Fig 2.3: Intergenerational Households
 Intergenerational households are the norm across both year-round and annually/seasonally returning farmworker groups. Nearly 50% of respondent households indicated they are currently living with family members, and the vast majority of those are living with their adult children in intergenerational households. In addition to easing rent burden, intergenerational households also have important well-known health benefits including strengthening family connections, improved health, and well-being, reduced social isolation and increased access to childcare and respite care.

FAMILY SEPERATION TRENDS

FARMWORKERS LIVING WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18 AND COMMUTE TIMES

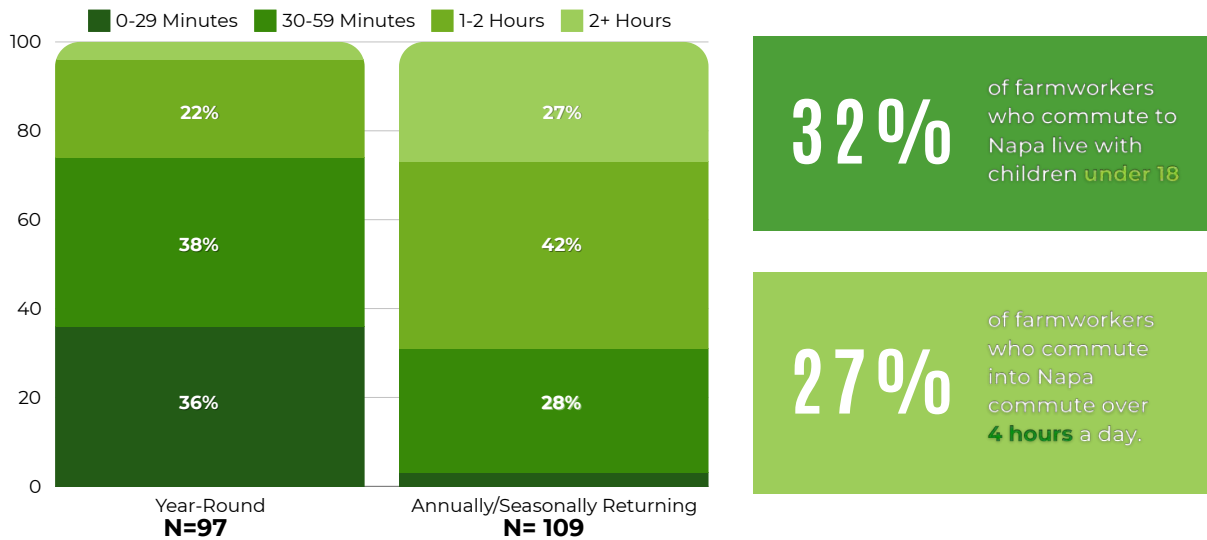


Fig 2.4: Family Separation Trends
 Long commutes do more than take a personal toll on the farmworker(s) commuting. They also create functional family separation by removing one or both parents from the home during most if not all of the waking hours in their child(ren)'s day. One-third of all farmworkers surveyed live with their under-18-year-old children. Two-thirds of farmworker parents living outside of Napa County spend more than three hours a day commuting, with 27% of them spending more than four hours a day driving to and from work. *Data in chart not labeled for Year-Round respondents: 2+ Hours (4.0%). Data in chart not shown for Annually/Seasonally Returning respondents: 0-29 Minutes (3.0%)*

OVERCROWDED HOUSING CONDITIONS



One farmworker shared a story of living in a single household with **17 other people** during one season



Survey Data showed an instance of **7 farmworkers** to a motel room



N= 252



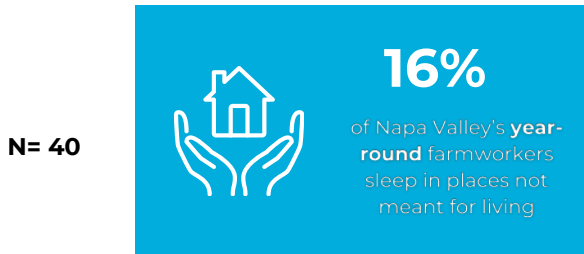
N= 409

Fig 2.5: Overcrowded Housing Conditions
Overcrowding into housing that is affordable is common across year-round and annually/seasonally returning groups. One farmworker told us about finding a two-bedroom apartment for their family and needing to rent out the living room to a non-family member to make rent. Survey data showed an instance of 7 farmworkers sharing one motel room. Overcrowded housing is related to higher rates of physical illness, increased food insecurity and poorer mental health.

SLEEPING IN PLACES NOT MEANT FOR LIVING



N= 671



N= 40



N= 107



Fig 2.6: Sleeping in Places Not Meant for Living
One-in-six year-round farmworkers and one-in-four annually/seasonally returning farm workers reported having slept in a place not meant for living at least once during the last 12 months. Drivers of these experiences include extended workdays (resulting in coveted overtime hours) combined with long commutes, or lack of access to rental housing at the start of seasonal work resulting in farmworkers sleeping in a car, tent or outside.

Safety & Connectivity Issues

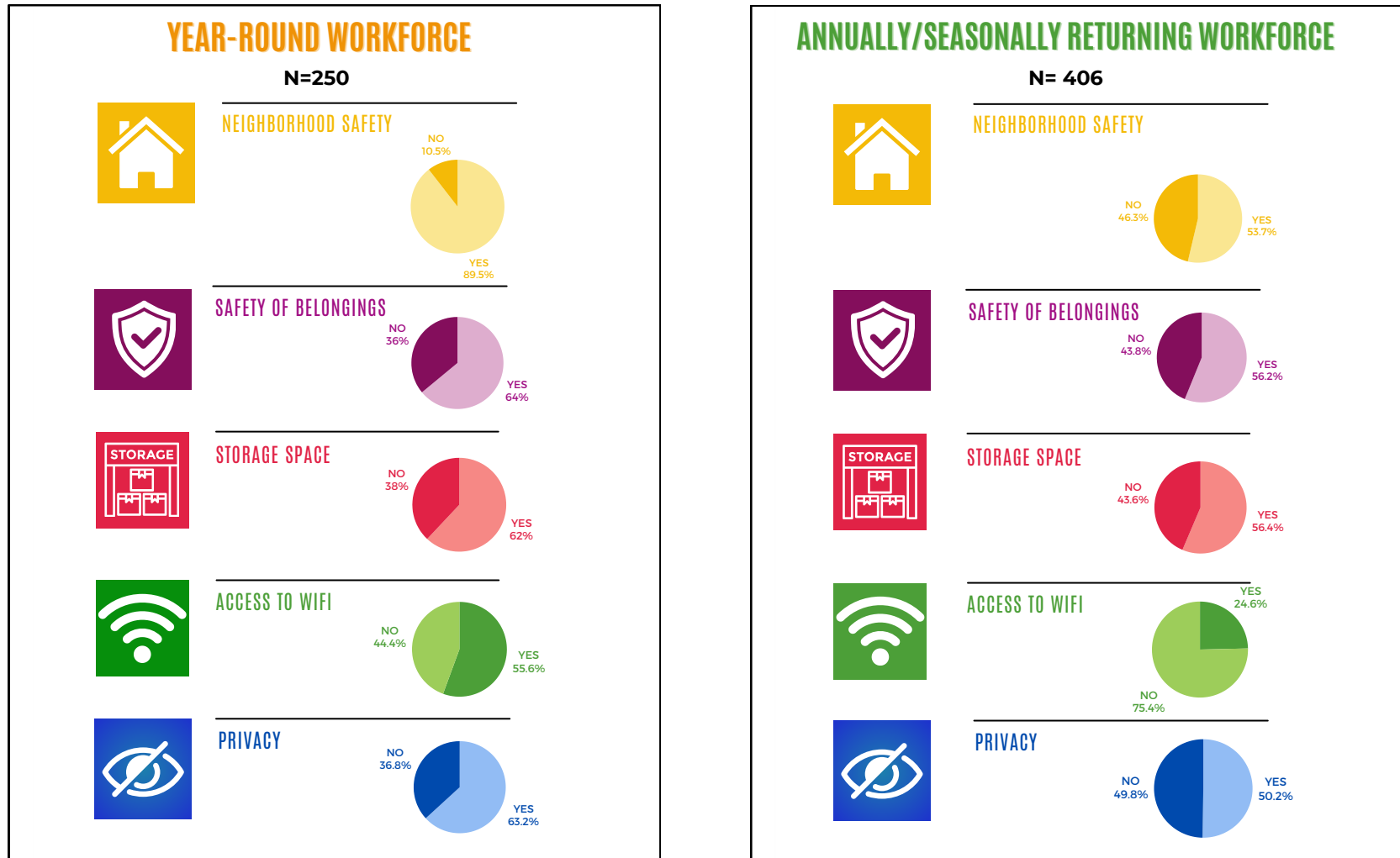


Fig 2.7: Trade-offs related to safety in housing are evident in the survey responses. 89% of year-round workers reported feeling safe in their neighborhoods, whereas only 54% of annually/seasonally returning farmworkers felt the same. Both groups experience overcrowded housing situations, which are reflected in the lack of basic privacy, safety of belongings, and storage space. Access to Wi-Fi is crucial for civic engagement, career growth, and connecting to essential services. Only 36% of all survey respondents have access to Wi-Fi where they live, and less than a quarter of annually/seasonally returning farmworkers have access.

Box 3: Employee Shuttle Program

The Calistoga Chamber of Commerce tried a private shuttle in June of 2016. The shuttle was intended to link employees in Santa Rose to jobs in Calistoga. Rides were offered at \$7.50 each way. The idea was borrowed from Bay area High Tech firms providing employee shuttle services. Shuttle services alleviate traffic congestion and reduce individual trip road miles, offering a greener alternative to solo drives and small carpools. The service used coach busses with comfy seats and offered free Wi-Fi for riders. The idea may have been ahead of its time, or simply not given the time it needed to catch on: the pilot program was terminated after just two months due to low ridership.

Box 4: Cal Vans Program

CalVans is a program sponsored by the California Vanpool Authority, a public agency, that provides qualified agricultural workers in certain CA Counties with safe, affordable vans they can use to drive themselves and others to work. A one-time start-up grant provided money to set-up the CalVans program and to purchase the 15-passenger vans. Riders pay a modest fare to ride in a CalVans vanpool. Drivers receive no pay — they simply volunteer to operate a vanpool and enjoy the benefits of a safe, reliable and affordable commute to work. All CalVans vanpools per trip costs are determined after the trip has occurred. The overall cost is based on the number of passengers and distance traveled. The more riders, the less each rider pays. The Agency bills the main volunteer driver on a weekly or monthly basis to recover 100% of the costs associated with operating the vanpool for either the week or the month. CalVans pays for the fuel, maintenance, repairs, and a general liability insurance policy.

CalVans is not yet approved to operate in Napa County.



HIGH BARRIERS TO HOUSING NAVIGATION & EMPLOYERS PROVIDING SOCIAL SERVICES

WHAT are the unique barriers Farmworkers face to accessing housing?

The housing challenges faced by farmworkers, especially those who return annually and seasonally, are quite complex due to the unique obstacles they face to finding housing. These obstacles include difficulties in accessing housing opportunities and applications in their primary language, the significant time and cost required to submit multiple housing applications each season, and the negative impacts of informal leases and shared rooms.

Based on surveys and interviews, language access presents a significant challenge for farmworkers in Napa County. Survey data reveals only 12% of respondents speak English, while over 95% speak Spanish and more than 35% also speak an indigenous language. This language breakdown is more pronounced among annually/seasonally returning farmworkers, with one in three speaking an indigenous language compared to one in nine year-round farmworkers. Language access is a substantial barrier to accessing and maintaining housing for limited English proficiency households, who struggle to understand lease terms, house rules, or face difficulties in obtaining housing information and understanding their rights. Some landlords are unwilling to assist potential renters with applications due to language barriers. Additionally, farmworkers encounter higher barriers in the mortgage and lending market. Community-based organizations in Napa report farmworkers need the support of English speakers to navigate housing options and complete rental applications, given that housing listings and materials are rarely available in Spanish or other indigenous languages.

Farmworkers, especially those who return annually/seasonally, face a significant challenge with non-refundable application and background check fees when applying for rental housing. These fees can amount to as much as \$200 per applicant and are incurred at the beginning of each season. The requirement to pay upfront deposits and last months rent at lease-up can also be a significant financial hurdles for farmworker households. Consequently, many opt to informally sublease rooms from a single leaseholder or homeowner, often returning to the same housing



Informal leasing arrangements make it difficult for returning farmworkers to demonstrate good rental histories to potential landlords.

High Barriers to Housing Navigation & Employers Providing Social Services

unit for years under this informal arrangement. As a result, farmworkers who have been returning to Napa County annually for over ten years may not have a formal rental history, making it difficult for landlords to view them as desirable tenants in a highly competitive housing market.

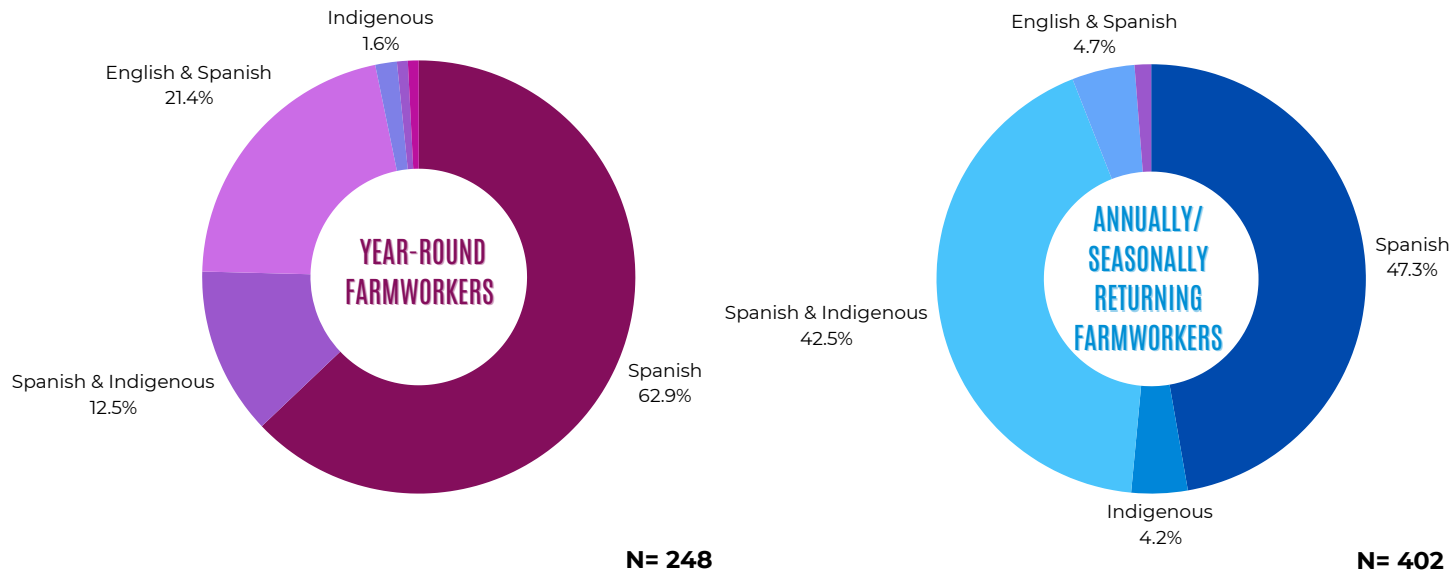
The challenges of returning to work in Napa County each year are compounded by various issues. To address the high turnover among skilled and long-serving workers, employers are taking on the additional responsibility of formally and informally providing social services like housing navigation and application support to retain their employees. Some employers have created new operational-level farmworker advocate positions to help workers access housing, social services, and economic development resources. Others are adjusting shift schedules and crew compositions to support childcare provision and transportation networking. All employers we spoke with shared a feeling of being overwhelmed by the complexity of the housing market and the challenge it presents for their employees. They indicated a growing need for a collaborative, community-wide supportive solution to this issue, expressing concern both for the farmworkers who deserve higher levels of support and the operational strain this service provision places on smaller, independent operators.



“The Valley is what it is because of all these people who can work in the fields. Without farmworkers, this Valley isn’t what it is. If we don’t figure out how to house them and make it affordable so they can live here, at some point we are going to end up without a workforce.”

-Employer Key Informant Interview

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

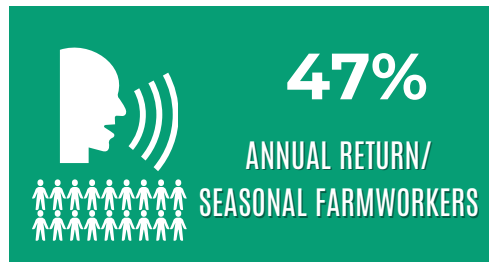
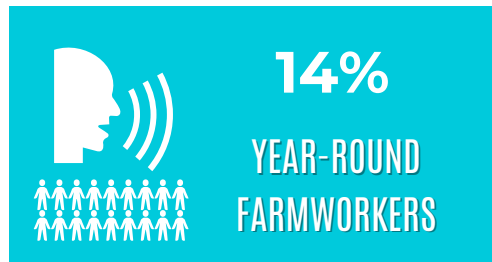


Language access refers to the ability of individuals to effectively communicate and access information, services, and opportunities in their primary language, which is essential for building an inclusive community.

Fig 3.1: Languages Spoken

Differences in language spoken between the two groups reflect unique language access barriers. Annually/seasonally returning farmworkers are more likely to be monolingual Spanish speakers and far more likely to speak an indigenous language. Only 5% of annually/seasonally returning farmworkers are bilingual English and Spanish speakers compared to 21% of year-round farmworkers. *Data in chart not labeled for Year-Round respondents: Other (0.8%), English Only (0.8%). Data in chart not shown for Annually/Seasonally Returning respondents: Other (1.2%), English Only (0%)*

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY NAPA FARMWORKERS



INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

- Tzotzil Tzetal Chatino Nahuatl
- Triqui Amuzgo Zapoteco
- Purepecha Mixteco Itzal
- Q'anjob'al Creole Q'eqchi' Zoque
- Mam Tojolabal Otomil Akatek
- Mayan

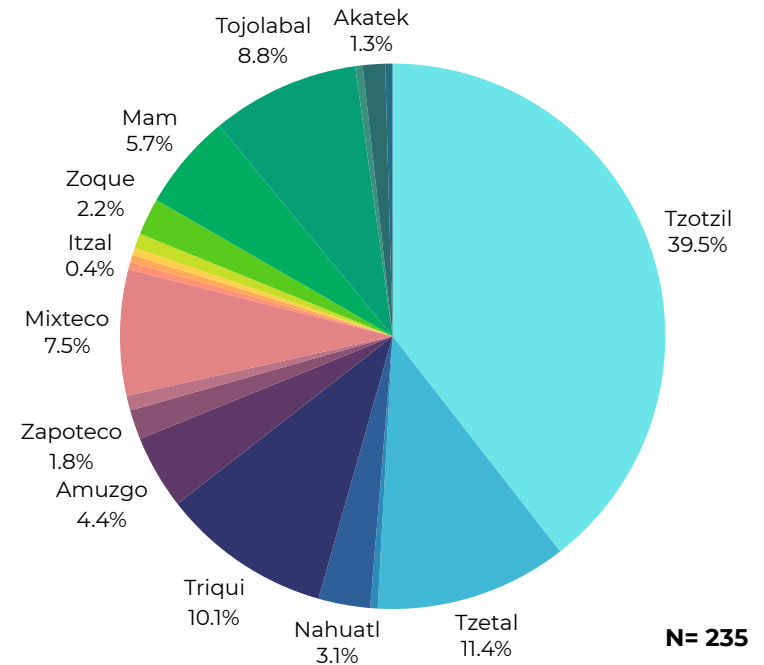
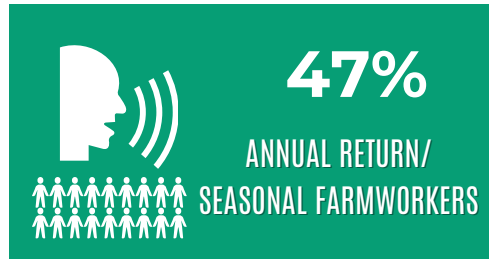
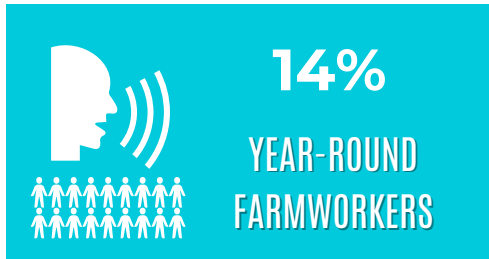


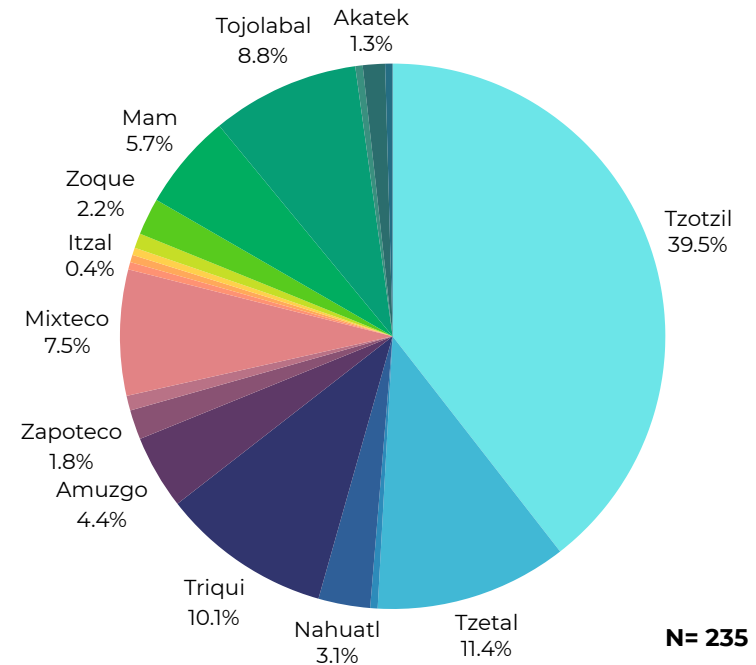
Fig 3.2: Language Access - Indigenous Languages Spoken By Napa Farmworkers
 Survey results identify **19 indigenous languages** spoken. Fully 34% of respondents speak one of these languages, indicating a sizable population of indigenous language speakers among the farm labor force in Napa County. Among the 19 identified indigenous languages Tzotzil was the most common, spoken by 40% of all indigenous language speakers. Other significant languages included Tzetal 11%, Triqui 10%, Tojola'bal 9% and Mixteco around 8%. 61.9% of all indigenous languages spoken among Napa Valley farmworkers are from the state of Chiapas, Mexico. This data not only identifies the diversity of languages spoken among Napa Valley farmworkers but indicates the crucial and growing need to provide multilingual, multicultural support services especially for the annually/seasonally returning workforce. *Data in chart not labeled Purepecha (0.9%), Q'eqchi' (0.9%), Maya (0.4%), Otomil (0.4%), Q'anjob'al (0.4%), Chatino (0.4%).*

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY NAPA FARMWORKERS



INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

- Tzotzil
- Tzetal
- Chatino
- Nahuatl
- Triqui
- Amuzgo
- Zapoteco
- Purepecha
- Mixteco
- Itzal
- Q'anjob'al
- Creole
- Q'eqchi'
- Zoque
- Mam
- Tojolabal
- Otomil
- Akatek
- Mayan



DIFFICULTY PAYING RENT - PRIVATE MARKET

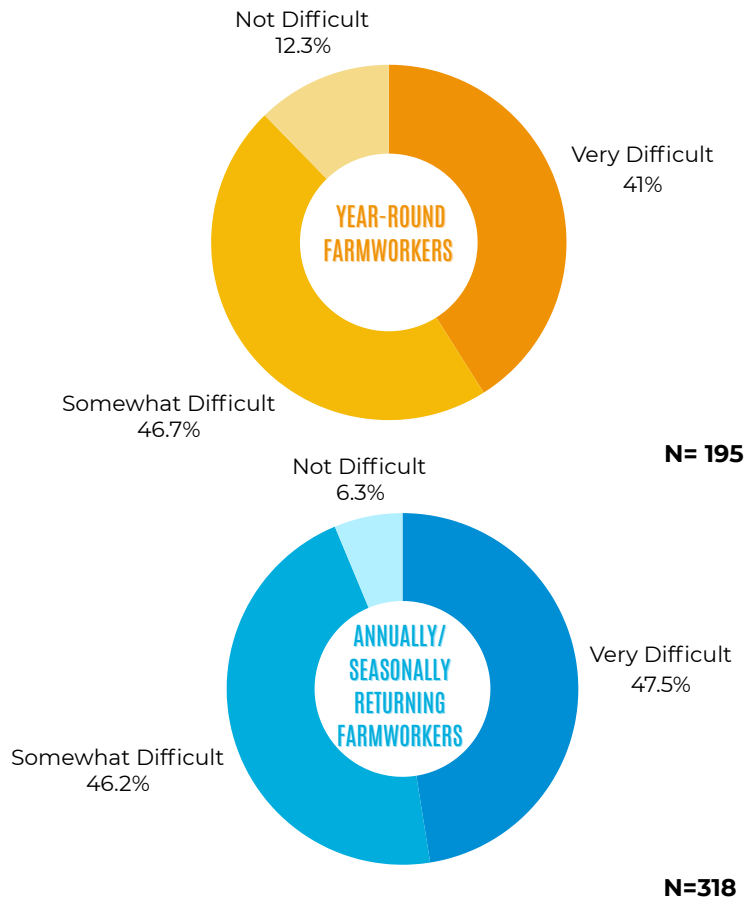


Fig. 3.3 Difficulty Paying Rent - Private Market

The overwhelming majority of farmworkers find it either very difficult or somewhat difficult to pay rent. Excluding respondents at the farmworker centers (n=513), only 9% of annually/seasonally returning farmworkers, and 12.3% of year-round farmworkers do not find it difficult to pay rent.

DIFFICULTY PAYING RENT - FARMWORKER CENTERS

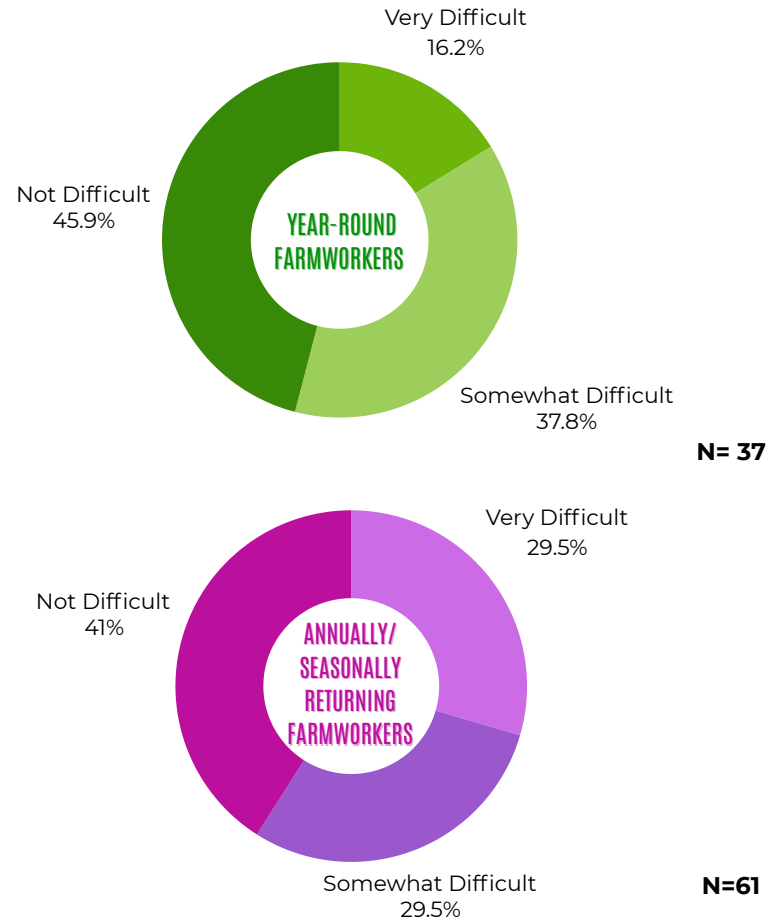


Fig. 3.4 Difficulty Paying Rent - Farmworker Centers

Among farmworkers living at one of the Napa County Farmworker Centers a very different picture emerges regarding the difficulty of paying rent. 43% of farmworkers living at the Calistoga, Mondavi, and River Ranch Centers do not find it difficult to pay rent. The significant reduction in rent burden for farmworkers living in County-operated centers provides an important illustration of the ongoing and vital role of the Centers as a housing solution.

Difficulty Paying Rent: A Farmworker Story

During a key informant interview, one farmworker shared his housing experience in which he felt "forced" to buy the older home he and his family lived in when the landlord decided to sell it. To keep their housing mortgage, their monthly cost increased by \$1,000 - significantly impacting his family's financial stability. He attempted to find other rental options, but market rates for rental apartments were the same as the mortgage payment. Feeling like he had no other choice, the decision to buy meant the family was no longer able to set money aside for savings. He worries constantly that without any savings, any interruption to his paycheck would put his family at risk of losing their home.

"Todo se puede en esta vida, de viviendo en un garaje a un apartamento, a una casa. Eso todo lo pude lograr con esfuerzo, empeño, y echándole ganas."

"Anything is possible in this life, from living in a garage to an apartment, to a house. All of this could be achieved with effort, persistence, and giving it your best."

-Farmworker Key Informant Interview



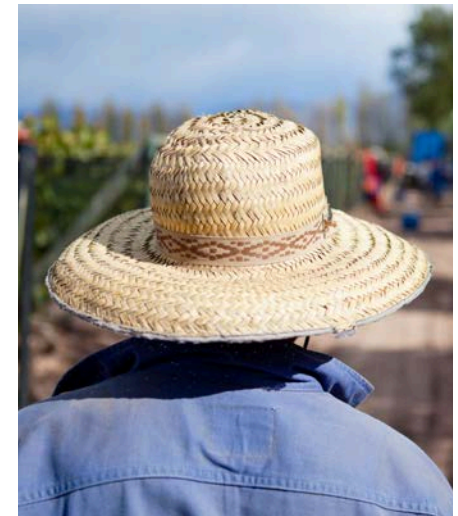
IF WE DO NOTHING

WHY is action necessary?

Everyone interviewed for this report - including farmworkers, employers, and service providers - expressed a common concern about the **risks of not addressing farmworker housing access**. They resoundingly believe the lack of affordable housing for farmworkers is devaluing the experience of working in Napa. Both surveyed and interviewed farmworkers take great pride in being part of the highly skilled farm labor workforce that forms the foundation of Napa Valley's world-class wines. Employers similarly take pride in the skill of Napa Valley farmworkers, recognizing their unique contribution to the quality of Napa Valley wines.

U.S.-born Americans have been showing less interest in manual farm labor for a while, and current labor shortages in Napa are partly due to an aging workforce. Nationally the average age of farmworkers rose from 37.2 years in 2006 to 41.6 years in 2022. This aligns with survey data shown in Fig 1.2. Long-tenured permanent and seasonally returning farmworkers point out that young workers are not attracted to entering the farm labor force in Napa due to high rents or long commutes that they have to deal with on an entry-level wage. In other words, the investment of years required to acquire the skills that command higher wages is not enough to offset the costs incurred over those years.

Employers require a reliable local pool of skilled year-round permanent and seasonal farmworkers to sustain their operations. Building and maintaining a robust local workforce involves more than simply recruiting labor from other regions. While the H-2A Visa Program can help fill crucial labor shortages, it also raises costs due to its complex administrative processes and does not guarantee a long-term, skilled workforce.



“There are less people that are willing to work in agriculture.

Something to explore is - how much more labor supply would we have if we ease the shortage of housing we have here?”

-Employer Key Informant Interview

If We Do Nothing

Cultivating a local workforce involves helping those just entering the farm labor workforce and farmworker families, including access to housing that allows their children to attend local schools and benefit from the educational programs offered by public high schools and Napa Valley College. These programs can prepare them for careers in the farming and wine industries.

Without a large local farm labor workforce, employers are concerned about having to shift to mechanization to replace human labor. Many employers mentioned that **mechanization can replace human labor, but it may also result in reduced quality.** While mechanization's cost and efficiency benefits are widely acknowledged, many vintners prefer hand-labor to maintain cluster structure supporting such decisions as fermenting the grapes with stems to extract the tannins that are a hallmark of Napa Cabernets. In all cases, greater utilization of mechanization was seen as a potential response to the lack of farm labor, rather than the main reason for it.



“They are giving up housing quality because they are not able to afford higher and higher rents. So they are moving from an apartment to a trailer. And who knows where afterwards? In that case, you know, farmworkers that are doing that are still coming to work, but you never know for how long. If those things keep going on that downward slope, at some point that person will have to move out of the County. And at some point that might end up being a person that you lose because of housing problems. Everything is pointing in that direction. No one has told me I didn’t come here for work because I couldn’t find a house. But there might be MANY people that I don’t see because they don’t come here to look for work because they won’t have a housing solution.”

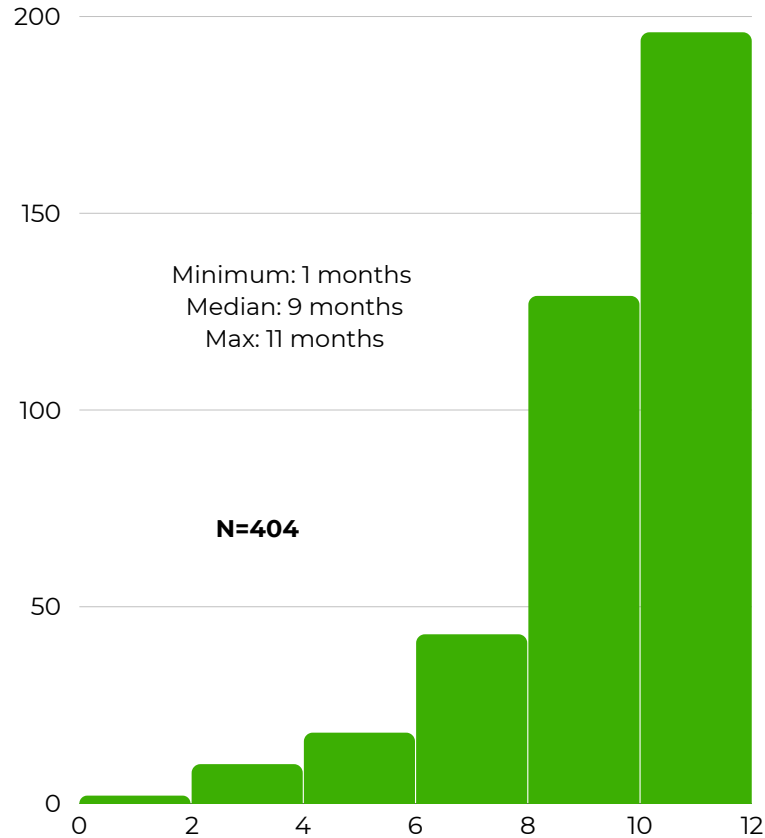
-Employer Key Informant Interview

SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT FOR FARMWORKERS

NUMBER OF MONTHS WORKING IN NAPA COUNTY



Photograph: Sarah Anne Risk



9

Annually/seasonally returning farmworkers work on average **9 months** out of the year

Fig 4.1: Seasonal Employment for Farmworkers

Historically, seasonal farmwork in Napa was fairly condensed to the summer and harvest season. The actual percentage of survey responders working in Napa just 1-6 months a year was **only 18%**. Survey data shows **more than 80%** of annually/seasonally returning farmworkers working in Napa County do so for 8-11 months out of the year. This is closer to the annual work calendar of teachers with summer breaks.

HOUSING TYPE PREFERENCES

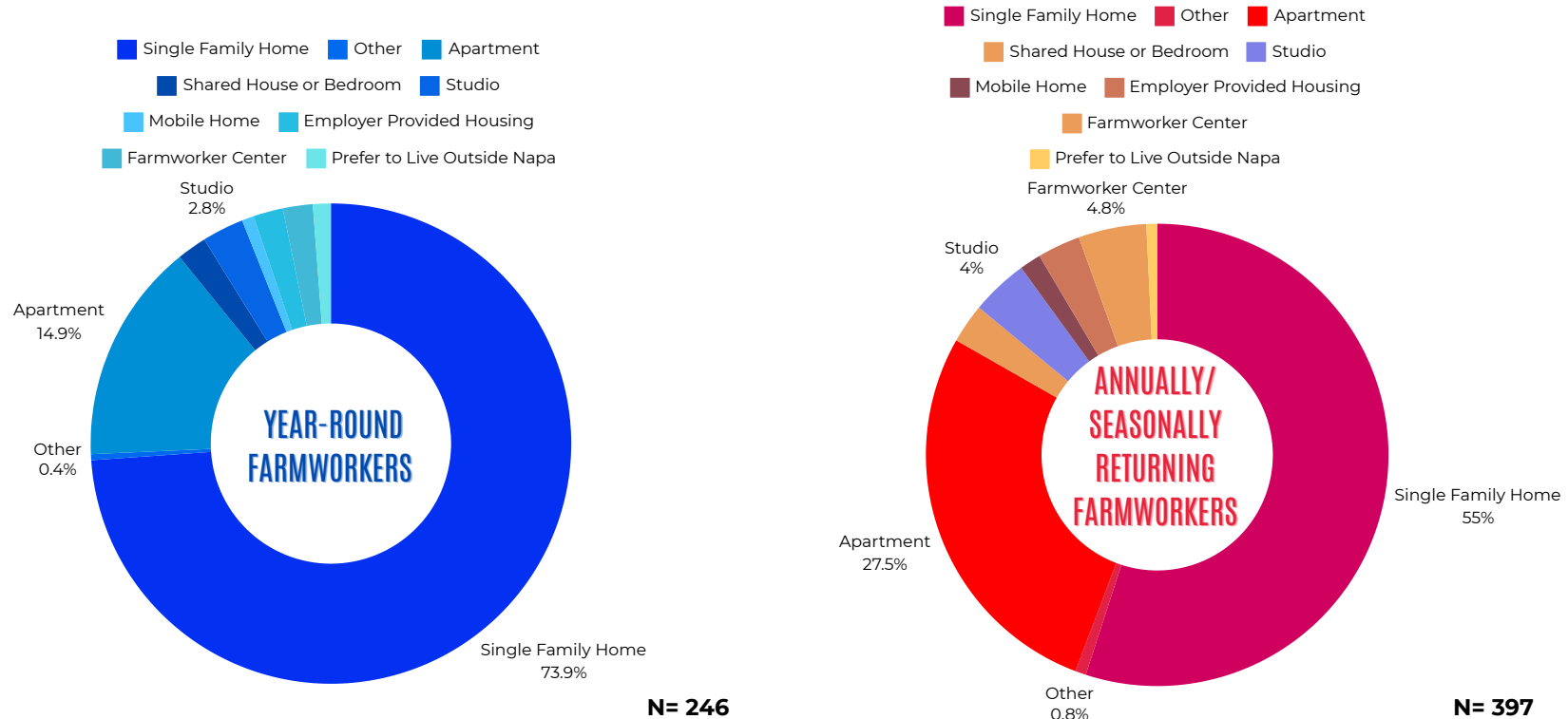
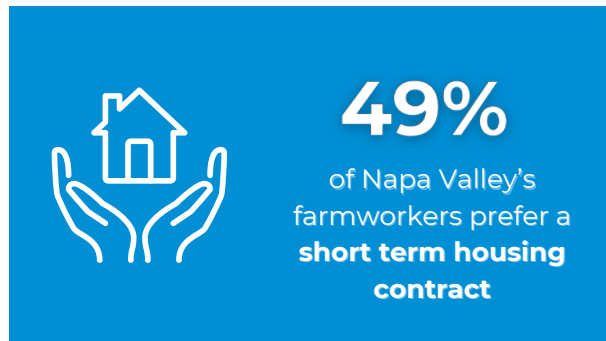
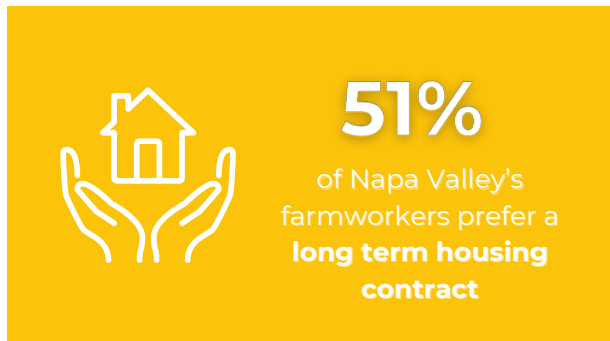


Fig 4.2: Housing Preferences

When asked what type of housing they prefer to reside in, the vast majority of all farmworkers surveyed said they prefer non-congregate housing options, primarily desiring single family homes or apartments. These types of units are rarely available at affordable rental rates for short term contracts - month to month leases are typically available for vacation rental-type rentals, and are considerably more expensive than long-term leases. *Data in chart not labeled for Year-Round respondents: Shared House or Bedroom (2%), Mobile Home (0.8%), Employer Provided Housing (2%), Farmworker Center (2%), Prefer to Live Outside of Napa County (1.2%). Data in chart not shown for Annually/Seasonally Returning respondents: Shared House or Bedroom (2.8%), Mobile Home (1.5%), Employer Provided Housing (3%), Prefer to Live Outside of Napa County (0.8%)*

HOUSING CONTRACT PREFERENCES

AMONG ALL NAPA VALLEY FARMWORKERS

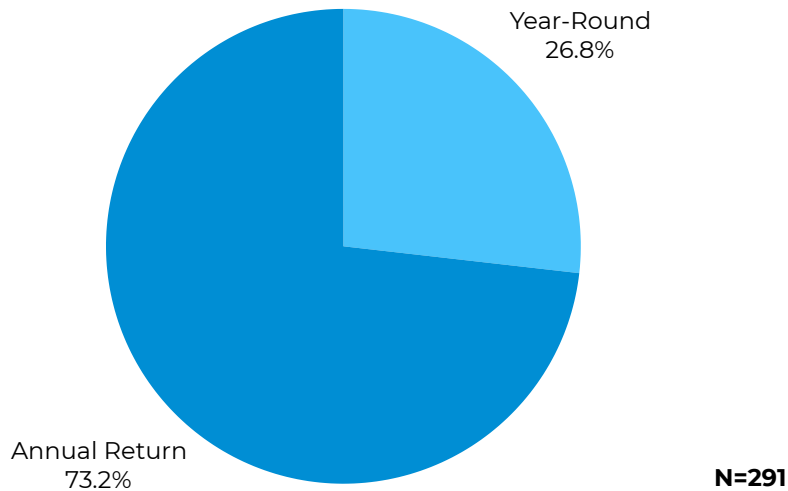


Photograph: Sarah Anne Risk

Fig 4.3 Housing Contract Needs – All Farmworkers

Differences in the overall size of the two groups are important to consider when looking at what kinds of solutions are needed for the 9,000-strong labor force: Based on survey respondents, farmworkers working in Napa year-round make up 40% of the overall workforce, and those working annually/seasonally returning account for 60%. Applying the preference percentages in Fig 4.4 preferences for long and short-term housing solutions split 51%/49%.

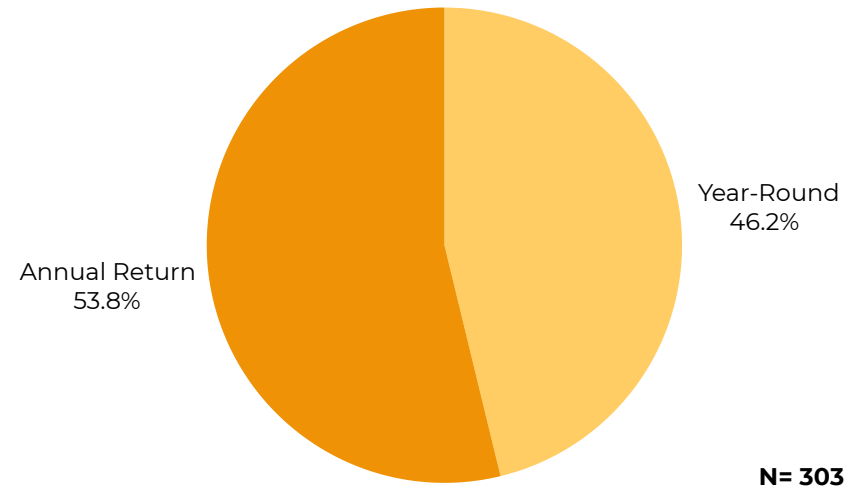
SHORT TERM HOUSING CONTRACT



73% of annually returning farmworkers prefer a short term contract

27% of year-round farmworkers prefer a short term contract

LONG TERM HOUSING CONTRACT



54% of annually returning farmworkers prefer a long term contract

46% of year-round farmworkers prefer a long term contract

Fig 4.4 Short Term vs Long Term Housing Contract Needs/Preferences

Meeting the housing needs of farmworkers starts with understanding of both the distinct groups within labor force, and what their preferences and desires are. Among farmworkers who prefer a short-term contract, the vast majority are annually/seasonally returning. These responders often have full-time households out-of-county and prefer short-term rental options for the duration of their seasonal work only. Preferences for long-term contracts are fairly evenly split between year-round and annually/seasonally returning farmworkers. Differences in the overall size of the labor force across both groups mean no one solution or housing type can meet the needs of the labor force.

Key Informant Interview Quotes

"I think I would say just how tenuous it is for so many people and just how close they are to the brink of disaster, disaster being housing insecurity in this case. It really doesn't take a whole lot. There are things that people deal with every single day that impact their housing insecurity and that is what we're seeing as really the number one issue."

-Social Service Provider Interview

"Para hallar una casa para alguien que trabaja en el campo está bien duro. Tienen que juntarse dos o tres [campesinos]."

"To find a house for someone who works in the fields is very hard. Two or three [farmworkers] need to join together."

-Farmworker Interview

"Personally [working on housing issues] is one of the things I enjoy most about my job. It gives me a lot of satisfaction. It's good people trying to do good things for good reasons for other good people. That's all good stuff. But it can be frustrating, like so many other things in life.

-Industry Group Leader Interview

"Se necesita la gente campesina para sacar adelante todo [trabajo agrícola]. Cualquier clase de trabajo aquí, estamos nosotros. Estamos para hacerlo. Eso que entiendan porqué es algo necesario. Es necesario la mano campesina en todo para hacer el trabajo. Que no nada más somos una carga, y eso debieran ver."

"We need farmworkers to carry out all [agricultural work]. Any kind of work here, we are present. We are here to do it. That is what they should understand because it's something necessary. To get the work done, the farmworker's hand is necessary in everything. We are not a burden, and that is what they should see."

-Farmworker Interview

"To tell the story about what we've done [with CSA4 (see Box 1, page 6)] in Napa County to-date: its far from perfect, but I don't know anybody else doing anything similar. Still, there is a need for more and we could and should do more. So we've got to keep pushing that. We cannot rest on our laurels.

-Industry Group Leader Interview

Opportunities

Napa Valley can be proud of the foresight and commitment demonstrated by its vineyard owners in enacting CSA No. 4, which provides for the only assessment of its kind in the country. This commitment makes Napa a model for agricultural responsibility and a leader in social sustainability. At the same time, more investment is needed to ensure the future success of Napa Valley and its farm labor workforce. The Farmworker Housing Needs and Impacts Assessment shares a powerful story our community needs to understand. It sheds new light on the lives of farmworkers in Napa, revealing difficult choices they face and barriers they encounter in finding affordable, local housing. It also reveals the efforts of the industry and employers to address these challenges and highlights the numerous obstacles they too confront. Farmworker housing needs are as multifaceted as the impact the lack of housing has on the industry and Napa economy. The data contained in this report urges all of us to come together to transform our perceptions, address immediate challenges collaboratively, and make meaningful investments in our community's future.

01 Dedicated Farmworker Homebuyer Down Payment Assistance

Dedicated Farmworker Homebuyer Down Payment Assistance to support permanent farmworkers and inter-generational households with accessing homeownership in Napa County. The County already provides the **Proximity Workforce Down Payment Assistance Program** (see **Box 5**, page 45). Additional steps to consider include annual set-aside funding for farmworker households, and consideration of a higher household combined income to support intergenerational households using 3-4 incomes to qualify for first mortgages. These combined incomes may collectively put the “household” overqualified median income thresholds.

02 Providing Housing Navigation Assistance

Providing Housing Navigation Assistance to year-round farmworkers and their families will help them find housing more easily. This assistance can be based on the **Coordinated Entry System (CES)** (see **Box 6**, page 45), which is a great way to prioritize households for services based on community-determined criteria, identify, and hold available housing units, match them with prioritized households based on their income, and support them through the application and lease-up process. Creating a CES-style service model specifically for farmworkers reduces the need for informal support from employers and eliminate duplication of services by many small-scale providers. Centralizing this system can also help with additional supports like providing incentives to landlords for new leases and offering additional risk mitigation guarantees.

03 Expanded Access to Short-Term and Nightly Housing Through Farmworker Centers

Expanded access to short-term and nightly housing through Farmworker Centers to increase access to safe, stable, and affordable nightly housing solutions for seasonally returning farmworkers and those with permanent housing commuting here from considerable distances. Napa County currently operates three 60-bed night-by-night lodging centers (supporting up to 180 farmworkers nightly) funded in part by the CSA No.4 assessment (see **Box 1**, page 6). All three Napa County Farmworker Centers (Centers) run at or near occupancy throughout the year. The measure (Napa County Code § 18.104.305) permitting these Centers in the Ag Preserve limits them to no more than 60 beds per location, and no more than five in total. Survey data supports the role and value of additional Centers, or consideration of the expansion of beds at the existing Centers. The latter would require an action by voters but is worthy of consideration given the value of existing Center infrastructure and the potentially less expensive option to renovate and expand rather than build and operationalize an entirely new location.

04 Financial Literacy Services

Expanding access to Financial Literacy Services provide support for farmworkers in managing seasonal wage fluctuations, protecting against fraud schemes targeting low-wage and limited English proficiency households, accessing low- or no-cost personal banking to reduce check-cashing and online payment fees, and planning steps to become homeowners. Several local agencies, such as the Napa Valley Farmworker Foundation, UpValley Family Center, and Puertas Abiertas, offer some of these services. However, there is mutual agreement among agencies, employers, and farmworkers that more capacity is needed within these agencies to meet the demand. The Napa Valley Farmworker Foundation recently received a USDA grant to expand its financial literacy education program. This program offers in-person classes and recorded classes uploaded to a video library, which can be accessed by individuals and HR departments to facilitate employer-based training. Past classes have covered topics such as:

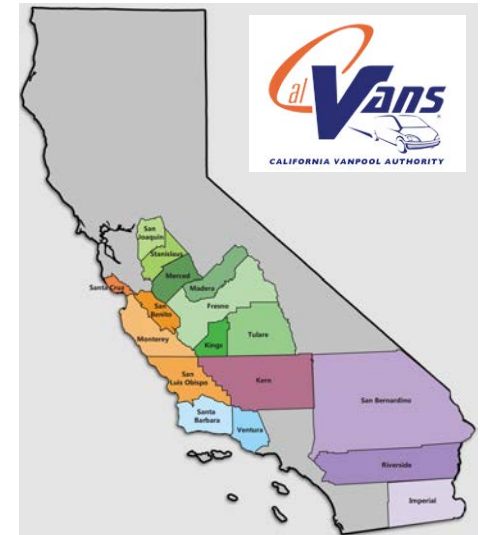
- Steps to Owning a Home with Redwood Credit Union
- Tax Preparation Resources with UpValley Family Centers
- Assessing Credit with Redwood Credit Union
- Fraud Protection with Redwood Credit Union
- Personal Budgeting for the Year Ahead with Wells Fargo
- Managing Credit and Debt with Redwood Credit Union



Photograph: Sarah Anne Risk

05 Transportation Solutions

Transportation solutions are needed for farmworkers who commute long distances to work, to reduce travel costs, simplify commuting logistics, and improve their well-being. Interviews and surveys reveal available public transportation options are ill-suited to farmworker needs, and employer-provided/sponsored solutions are not feasible due to labor law regulations. Previous efforts to address this challenge, such as the "Employee Shuttle Program," (see **Box 3**, page 27) were unsuccessful. Nonetheless, those efforts can help inform future initiatives aimed at getting local workers to agricultural job sites in more sustainable ways, thereby relieving housing burdens and taking climate action. One promising option is the CalVans Program (see **Box 4**, page 27), which is currently only available in Central and Southern California Counties. Lobby efforts to expand this program to Napa County farmworkers could significantly reduce commute costs for many long-distance commuters.



06 Improve Wifi Access

Improve Wi-Fi Access: Digital inclusion is a crucial component of broader initiatives to build strong, inclusive communities and improve the opportunities and quality of life for farmworkers. Access to Wi-Fi, particularly high-speed wireless connectivity, is essential for accessing various online resources such as continuing education courses, healthcare information, and housing opportunities, including affordable housing designated for farmworkers. Strategies to improve digital access include establishing broadband network infrastructure at farmworker centers and in multifamily rental complexes. Additionally, converting video and photo-based educational content into illustration-based content lowers file-size resolution supporting faster load time over lower speed networks. Illustrations can serve as important language-access bridges for low Spanish-proficiency indigenous language speakers.

07 Increasing Access to Low- and No-Cost Food

Increasing access to low- and no-cost food can be an effective intervention strategy for addressing housing burdens and improving health. After paying rent, purchasing food is often the second-highest monthly cost for low-income farmworker households. By improving coordination and distribution of food to farmworkers, we can provide immediate monthly budget relief to cash-strapped households. Furthermore, better coordination and distribution of recovered food, such as excess restaurant or catering prepared food, could improve access to more nutritious meals for long-distance commuters who must eat most of their weekly meals on the road or at their worksite.

08 Employer-Provided Housing

Employer-provided housing is often seen as a straightforward solution to employee housing. However, many employers express a desire to offer housing directly but find existing regulatory barriers are excessively burdensome and cost prohibitive. In addition to the high regulatory barriers that make the conversion of existing housing units for employee use costly, there are also unique challenges for workers. For example, rental contracts provided by employers are not governed by the same rules as private housing unit leases. One key difference is the shorter notice period for lease termination, where tenant-employees are entitled only to 3 days' notice in the event of resignation or termination compared to the required minimum 30-day notice for private rental contracts. Further research is needed to understand the unit volume potential of this strategy, but it warrants consideration of providing low- and no-interest loans for the conversion costs in exchange for deed restrictions on the converted housing.

09 Create a Multi-jurisdiction Farmworker Housing Action Plan

Create a multi-jurisdiction farmworker housing action plan to facilitate a wide range of approaches, sharing of resources, and coordinated planning. A shared action planning process enhances communication across groups and within the region, prevents repetition of effort and makes the best use of economies of scale by leveraging individual assets and capabilities, and provides an organizational structure that supports the goal.

10 Support Efforts to Increase Affordable Housing Funds

Each of the opportunities presented in this report require funding. No one jurisdiction or organization can or should fund them alone. Current funding sources include Affordable Housing Impact Fees and a 1% Transient Occupancy Tax for workforce housing. Regional Housing Bonds could also bring a much-needed influx of additional funding.



Photograph: David Ortega

Box 5: Proximity Workforce Housing Down Payment Assistance Program

Proximity Workforce Housing Down Payment Assistance Program was established by the Napa County Board of Supervisors in 2011 to help local workers. The program is for low- and moderate-income households who are part of the Napa County workforce who want to buy a home near their workplace. The goal is to make it easier for individuals and families who work in Napa County to afford housing here and prevent them from having to buy housing in less expensive areas outside of the County that result in long daily commutes to work. The program offers up to 16.5% down payment assistance through a zero-interest, equity-share 55-year loan.

Box 6: Coordinated Entry System (CES)

The **Coordinated Entry System (CES)** connects people experiencing homelessness with supportive housing services and helps them find permanent housing. It prioritizes those who are most in need of assistance and provides important information to help communities allocate resources strategically and identify service gaps. CES uses a locally created, population-specific assessment, a centralized data system, a "by name" database of clients, a prioritization method, and housing location services to quickly find and match available housing units with individuals and families in need. CES has been in use in Napa County for over 10 years and is responsible for making more than 300 housing placements each year.

Acknowledgements

Board of Supervisors

The Napa County Board of Supervisors commissioned the Farmworker Housing Needs and Impacts Assessment Report in July 2023 to shed light on the housing challenges faced by farmworkers in Napa County and the impact those challenges are having on the Napa Valley wine industry. This comprehensive report aims to inform the community about these needs and impacts from two perspectives: First, to provide background and context on the unique barriers to accessing safe, affordable housing and services experienced by farmworkers working or living in Napa County. Second, to illuminate the related economic impacts farmworker housing insecurity, scarcity, and service limitations have on industry employers, business owners, and service providers. By examining the needs of both farmworkers and industry stakeholders, the report presents a clear picture of how housing challenges are affecting the entire agriculture industry in Napa County.

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